THE

VICAR OF BRAY.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

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THE

VICAR of BRAY.

CHAP. I.

VARIOUS are the motives which have incited me to preſent the following pages to the publick. Great characters, in all ages, have ſtill had their hiſtorian, or their poet, to preſerve them from oblivion; but in this generation, a number of intereſting and remarkable events, in vain, ſolicit a commemorating pen. Biography is unpractiſed; the muſes ſilent; nor has one perſon appeared diſpoſed, or calculated

to pay due tribute to the fame, or gratify the natural wiſhes of his cotemporaries.

But, whatever fate may attend the fame of heroes and miniſters, the honeſt Vicar of Bray ſhall not paſs uncelebrated: the *obligations* I owe him, and the conſanguinity I claim with him, (for he was brother to my mother) are undeniable demands upon me, to paint him in the ſtrongeſt, the moſt faithful colours; nor can I doubt, but his ſhare in political tranſactions, and connexions with men of rank and popularity, will furniſh (at leaſt for a couple of volumes) ſufficient matter of entertainment.

The birth or education of my uncle, have ſo little to do with his conduct, as an adult, that I ſhall in no degree enter upon them: and yet it may not be improper to obſerve, that even with the earlieſt dawnings of his reaſon, a kind

of *ſubtlety* was conſpicuous in his compoſition, not unaptly conſtrued by his relations into a mark of extraordinary genius. The humour of thoſe from whom he hoped to derive either gratification or advantage, was, at all times, his humour; the medium through which they choſe to ſee cauſes and effects, the only one conformable to his optics: no wonder, therefore, that he had little or no acquaintance with ill ſucceſs, whatever were his undertakings.

Harry Arundel (for it is proper my uncle ſhould have ſome name) had an unconquerable averſion to the clerical character: but, as in the neighbourhood of his family lived a man of the firſt faſhion, who was nearly related to his Grace of Canterbury; and, moreover, as that man of faſhion happened to be Harry's godfather, he did not heſitate to engage in that particular profeſſion, wherein it was obvious ſo right honour-

able a patron could, moſt effectually, as well as moſt conveniently, ſerve him.

The Earl of Windham had a nephew much of the ſame age with my uncle, and ſituated with him at the ſame college. No Oxford youth was ever ſo eminent as Harry Arundel for decency of manners, propriety of conduct, and unwearied application in his ſtudies. His friend, Mr. Windham, had too much volatility to follow his example; formed for diſſipation—gay, idle, and inconſiderate—he never once remembered, that lively purſuits were not the only end of his creation.

Mr. Arundel would frequently play the monitor, and remonſtrate with him on occaſions of extravagance or gallantry; but, from the *conviction*, that morality, however eloquent, was not the way to a youthful heart, he never omitted the more effectual one, of not only palliating

palliating Mr. Windham's irregularities, but condeſcending to be aiding and aſſiſting to the utmoſt of his abilities: the conſequence of which was, that the gentleman's letters to his relations were filled with Harry's praiſes, whilſt his own modeſtly inſinuated all he wiſhed ſhould be believed.

The college vacations were ſpent at the Earl's ſeat, where the buſy inclination of my uncle's breaſt was abundantly gratified. What field ſo fertile, what entertainment ſo rational as political diſquiſitions? and, as the Earl of Windham was a warm partiſan, his houſe was a rendezvous for all the nobility of certain principles. Schemes were formed—correſpondencies entered into, even ſo early as the year forty; notwithſtanding, actual rebellion did not burſt forth untill a much later period.

But amongſt the many juvenile flights in which Mr. Windham thought proper to engage, one had liked to have proved very fatal. Within thirteen miles of Oxford lived a poor old man, whoſe earlier days had been paſſed in more proſperous ſcenes. Illneſs and affliction had borne ſo heavily upon him, that he muſt infallibly have ſunk under them, if a daughter, gentle and beautiful as the human imagination can conceive, had not ſupported, had not conſoled him. He was incapable of all means of procuring a ſubſiſtence himſelf: their little, yet neat hovel, and homely, yet wholeſome fare, were wholly derived from her induſtry. She privately worked and waſhed for the collegians, and if diſadvantageous in point of profit, her ſtate of ſubordination, ſhe could not but be conſcious that her youth (whatever modeſt opinion ſhe might entertain of the uncommon graces of her perſon) rendered it dangerous for her to receive her employment but from

from a ſecond hand. Three or four years had elapſed in peace, and amiable reſignation, when Mr. Windham, in a ramble, was thrown from his horſe, and from principles of humanity, conveyed, by ſome hay-makers, to this remote habitation. Laurentia was, at the moment of his entrance, wiping the tear of anguiſh from the cheek of age with one hand, and feeding the helpleſs author of her exiſtence with ſome broth ſhe had juſt prepared for him, with the other. She ſtarted and turned pale at an appearance ſhe was unable to account for; nor did the intelligence of his being a ſtray Oxonian, in any degree, conduce to the recovery of her compoſure. Mr. Windham, though greatly frighted, and bruiſed in ſeveral parts of his body, was inconceivably aſtoniſhed at the lovely figure before him; and, as art and fineſſe were not the leaſt eminent features of his character, he magnified the misfortune he had met with, in order to recommend

himſelf the more ſtrongly to her compaſſion.

Laurentia was not deficient in acts of kindneſs or hoſpitality; but ſhe was much alarmed to find him prolong his viſit, beyond what ſhe very juſtly judged its neceſſary time. A meſſenger, at his requeſt, was diſpatched to Oxford. The Vicar arrived with a plentiful cargo of proviſions; and, contrary to the worthy girl's notions of propriety, wiſhes, and inclinations, they both took up their abode with her for ſeveral days. Mr. Windham inſiſted upon the unfitneſs of his being moved in his weak condition; and the Vicar inſiſting upon giving his friend due attendance.

As it happened, there was an apartment entirely detached from the ſpot Laurentia and her bed-ridden father occupied. A thouſand ſchemes were formed by theſe *ſpirited* young fellows, to wound the already

ready deeply-wounded, and add guilt to wretchedneſs; but, notwithſtanding all their ingenuity, they were utterly at a loſs how to proceed. The ſeal of virtue was on her face, and the glow of filial piety in her heart. To tempt her unſucceſſfully, was to expoſe themſelves not only to diſappointment, but inconvenience; and to leave her untempted, was deſtructive to their darling views. The Vicar inſinuated that nothing but violence—Mr. Windham ſhuddered at the idea, but promiſed great rewards if ſhe could once be obtained for him by any methods. Having reſolved to engage the good old man's approbation and confidence, by the decency of their conduct, they found no difficulty in carrying their reſolution into practice; at leaſt, to feign was never hard to them; nor were they only unexceptionable in their manners, but lulled every probability of ſuſpicion in the old man to ſleep, by affecting to

diſregard, as far as common civility could admit, the darling of his heart.

Laurentia herſelf, was equally deceived into a favourable opinion of the Oxonians, and often aſked them, If they were an exception to all rule? Or whether the ſtrange reports of the principles and proceedings of the young ſtudents were without foundation? The Vicar *convinced* her, that in a great meaſure, that was actually the caſe, preſenting her, at the ſame time, with what he conceived a happy adage, from being within the verge of her comprehenſion, that there was leſs injuſtice in hanging a dog, than giving him an ill name.

But though Laurentia was acceſſible to every ſpecies of converſation, that policy would permit them to let reach her father's ear, ſhe early diſcountenanced every overture,

overture, whether ſocial or complimental, when unſanctified by his preſence: the uniformity of her behaviour, in this reſpect, was the grand barrier they ſought to remove; the ſlighteſt lapſe would have been ſufficient for their purpoſe: the ſlighteſt lapſe never eſcaped her; and they were reduced to the neceſſity of altering their approaches.

Some medicines which the Vicar obtained from an eminent phyſician, on a deſcription of the caſe, together with Balchen's directions, had ſo happy an effect upon the cottager, under this blooming nurſe's tender adminiſtration, that he was once more able to bear himſelf to little diſtances, not only from his bed, but his home alſo. Gratitude and delight ſparkled in Laurentia's eyes, and ſhe began to conceive, that ſhe could never ſufficiently honour, or venerate ſuch abundant benefactors.

Theſe were ſenſations they wiſhed to improve. As air and exerciſe muſt be of uſe in the reſtoration of health, a one-horſe chair was accordingly hired by Mr. Windham, and twice a week, either him or the *worthy* Vicar gave the unſuſpecting father a whirl, to the ſatisfaction of all parties. It was during one of theſe unfortunate excurſions, that the deſtined victim was deſtroyed. The ſolitary ſituation of the dwelling, and the perſeverance of brutality, accompliſhed what the niceſt and moſt fraudulent arts laboured for in vain.

On the poor old man's return, he received the dreadful information, that his daughter was indiſpoſed; nor had ſhe the courage to behold his face for many days. The Vicar made a report of his own conduct, that afforded but little tranquillity to Mr. Windham's breaſt; nor was it an eaſy point to determine, whether they ſhould ſtay or fly.

In

In the midſt of their ſuſpence, a note was conveyed to them, to meet the injured creature in a field half a mile from her home. She approached them with a peculiar air—here, ſaid ſhe, is the wretch of *your* creation—but I come not to aſk, what is not in your power to grant.—My father ſhall not periſh, if his child can ſave him: let the fatal connexion be diſſolved by degrees, nor leave him the ſmalleſt reaſon to apprehend the returns he has received for honeſt kindneſs. If you have any idea of virtue, you may form ſome notion of the price I have determined to pay for the ſecurity of his peace. After what has happened, it is not for me to ſhrink from mortification or horror. I will ſee and treat you as uſual; your part cannot, therefore, be difficult.

Mr. Windham was exceedingly affected by her expreſſions and behaviour; —talked

—talked of atonement, and the generoſity of not proſecuting--Hold, Sir, ſaid ſhe, the mind that, under my circumſtances, could have a thought of atonement, would not deſerve even your contempt; and if there is a degree of unfeelingneſs beyond, it is the capacity of publiſhing to the world, what excites the keeneſt pangs of ſelf-reproach in even the boſom of innocence. You will find I have profited by my acquaintance with you; unacquainted with you, my language would now have been only the language of truth: I have paid dear for learning to give, perhaps, forcible ſounds, to what was, nevertheleſs, always my *ſenſe* of the principles of chaſtity.

Laurentia's abrupt departure gave theſe friends in iniquity a moment's time for reflexion.—If you can encounter her juſt indignation, ſaid Mr. Windham, I think her requeſt ought to be complied with;

with; but as to me, whatever a ſhort period may produce, I am not ſo hardened, at preſent, as to behold her.

The Vicar's ſoul was too callous to be ſhocked. Her diſtreſs had added new charms to her perſon; and he repaired to the cottage with *deſigns* perfectly ſuited to his nature. Their little ſupper paſſed away pleaſantly, as to the poor old man's ſhare of it, and though the tear of agony ſtole down his Laurentia's cheek, it was ſo induſtriouſly guarded, as to eſcape his notice.

The hour for retiring arrived, and the poor old man's pillow ſmoothed by the hand of duty and affection, Laurentia had hoped to relieve her burſting heart; when, to the laſt, the baneful confuſion of thoſe hopes, the Vicar ſeized her hand, and compelled her to participate the bed of guilt

guilt and cruelty.—This, cried ſhe, this I could never have foreſeen: and does the world contain ſo barbarous a ruffian?—My father! My father ſhall not be loſt!—My afflictions are incapable of mitigation;—not even my father's dreadfulleſt anguiſh could heal the miſeries of his child!—The miſeries of his child can ſhield him from deſpair!

The exulting Vicar now thought his conqueſt complete; nor had he the ſmalleſt doubt, but by certain methods and gradations to reconcile her to the tranſfer he was pre-determined to make of her; for ſhe officiated at breakfaſt, without one ſigh, and even looked upon him with more compoſure. O frailty! frailty! ſaid he, in a ſoliloquy, well may thou be deemed another name for woman!—This ſweet Laurentia!—Could I have expected her to ſurvive her well-diſſembled diſtreſs?—My fooliſh humanity had almoſt

moſt loſt me the victory, when ſhe knelt, and ſo pathetically ſued for mercy: yet we are not now only reconciled, but, if her pride and perverſeneſs would allow her to make the confeſſion, ſhe abſolutely adores me. A man of ſpirit has nothing to fear, if he does not deſert himſelf.

This intercourſe was, however, productive of a conſequence, that muſt have ruined both father and child, if Heaven, in pity, had not ſpoke the former into everlaſting repoſe. Laurentia acknowledged the benignity of the ſtroke, and followed him to his grave with pious gratitude. The Vicar, alarmed at the proſpect of expence, perſuaded himſelf, that this was the good time to reſign his claim, in favour of Mr. Windham: But, when he came to the cottage, he found it ſhut up, and devoid of inhabitants; nor did he think it convenient

venient to be too buſy in his enquiries. The wretched Laurentia, with a greatneſs of ſoul, unknown to what is generally called refinement, had formed her plan from the firſt hour of her deſtruction. With the little money ſhe could collect, ſhe tranſported herſelf to London, where ſhe waited and provided for an alarming event, with amazing fortitude. Her induſtry, her civility, and prudent behaviour, made her many friends: but what would have been a bleſſing to millions, was an unſpeakable aggravation of her ſuffering, the birth of a fine boy. Whatever affected only herſelf, ſhe endured without one complaint: but burſts of anguiſh were ever the conſequences of her turning her eyes on the helpleſs infant. She nevertheleſs recovered, was recommended as a ſervant to a gentleman's family, and the agonizing object of her ſolicitude placed out to her ſatisfaction.

With

With this family ſhe continued many years, with all *poſſible* contentment, as ſhe was unable to avoid ſometimes hearing the name of him, who had cauſed all her misfortunes.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE Earl of Windham had one ſon whom he thought proper to ſend over, at a very early age, to the univerſity at Geneva, for education, under the care of a moſt worthy tutor. The good man recently buried the wife of his tendereſt affections, and had only one child remaining, to bleſs his declining days: but in that child nature ſeemed to have made him ample amends for every evil he had ſuſtained. Never were features ſo exquiſitely turned, complexion ſo delightful, perſon ſo elegant, or diſpoſition and capacity ſo amiable and aſtoniſhing. He left her, however, at the earneſt requeſt of the Earl, to attend his ſon; his *poverty*, rather than his *will*, conſenting to the cruel ſeparation, and truſted, that a handſome living would have recompenced his ſelf-denial, have enabled him to ſave the darling of his exiſtence

exiſtence from the roughest blaſts of life.

Lord Churchill's temper, abilities, and behaviour were ſuch, that his father was perpetually receiving the moſt flattering accounts of him; nor were thoſe accounts ſuggeſted by any other motives, than ſincerity and juſtice. Lord Churchill's ſoul was, indeed, of that ſpecies, which ſeldom deigns to inhabit the breaſt of mortality. Tenderly attached to his tutor, he added all his experience to the vivacity of youth, and blended the philoſopher with the moſt elegant accompliſhments.

Lord Windham, unable longer to deny himſelf the pleaſure of beholding and converſing with ſuch a ſon, in his two-and-twentieth year, commanded his return to England. The amiable ſtudent quitted his young friends with a ſigh, and reluctantly exchanged the calm ſatisfaction

tion of retirement, for the noiſe, the ſplendor of life. He arrived, accompanied by his reverend friend, ſafe at his father's ſeat, where that gentleman remained only three weeks, and had ſcarcely embraced the object of his fondeſt affection, before he was attacked by a violent fever, which carried him off in a very ſhort period. His pupil, with an affection little inferior to filial, watched over him to his lateſt moment; and when deprived of him forever, became wholly inconſolable. Arundel and Mr. Windham were enjoined by the Earl, to exert themſelves for Lord Churchill's amuſement; but they did not ſufficiently underſtand the wounds of ſenſibility, to be capable of healing them.

Lord Windham, though on the verge of his grand climacteric, piqued himſelf not a little upon his taſte for amour. The pretty orphan he had engaged to protect, and received, at the hands of her

her departing father, with the peculiar ſolemnity of ſuch an occaſion, was beheld by him with unwarrantable approbation;—he was not the madman many had proved themſelves in an hour of dotage:—he abjured every thought of matrimony,—yet, was the ſweet Clara marked down for his own: and, in order to ſecure himſelf from what he conceived a very natural conſequence, the rivalſhip of his ſon or nephew, he committed her to the care of the truſty Vicar, untill a year or two ſhould give her to maturity, and furniſh him with a convenient opportunity for accompliſhing a moſt diabolical purpoſe. The Vicar adviſed (and his advice was held moſt good) that Lord Churchill ſhould be deceived into a belief, at the firſt probable period, that ſhe did not long ſurvive her father, as it would otherwiſe be impoſſible to prevent his frequently viſiting the dear remains of that moſt valued friend. Accordingly, in about ſix months afterwards, a let-

a letter, of the Vicar's writing and manufacturing, did arrive with the melancholy news of the lovely Clara's being dead, and was ſoon ſucceeded by another, with the particulars of her burial, at the place to which ſhe was ſent for education; and Lord Churchill could only give a few tears to her memory.

Infatuated Britain was now lifting its arm againſt its own peace. My uncle's knowledge of the political world, forcible language, plauſibility of appearance, with a thouſand other requiſites, did not fail to recommend him as a treaſure, to a party that was rearing its head for the moſt deſperate attempts. The clamour was almoſt univerſal—the lawful heir ſhould be reinſtated—the foreigner driven out: Mr. Arundel joined, and, in no ſmall degree, contributed to increaſe the confuſion; but, as it was ever a maxim with him, that *diſcretion* was no leſs the better part of politics than of valour, his

his proceedings were ſly, deep, and inſcrutable.

Lord Churchill, who was for reducing every thing to the ſtandard of reaſon, could not properly be ſaid to belong to any party. The conſtitution of England was too happy a one (and happineſs and propriety were, with him, ſynonimous terms) not to be high in his eſtimation. A rigid lover of juſtice, he was, nevertheleſs, firmly attached to the Brunſwick ſucceſſion, nor could he think how it was poſſible for the moſt uninformed mind to balance a moment in determining, that the religion of a prince, if not correſpondent with the religion of a people, (however inconteſtible his other pretenſions) was an inſuperable obſtacle to their receiving him for their king. Surely, he would frequently ſay to the Vicar, in an hour of privacy, the madneſs, the folly of mankind, were never more ſtrongly evinced than on the preſent oc-

caſion. To be diſſatisfied with the mild adminiſtration of a monarch, whoſe education and principles are ſo truly unexceptionable, becauſe not born on the very *ſpot* with themſelves; yet, in order to redreſs the grievance, inviting the hazardous rule of one both born and bred, not only in a foreign country, but in the very boſom of our mortal enemies; and who has embraced the Romiſh tenets, publickly embraced them, even at the period of his claiming a proteſtant government for his birth-right. You know, Mr. Arundel, he would add, I abjure all party prejudice, and that reaſon alone is the barometer of my ſentiments. That our never-failing friends the French ſhould take every meaſure to interrupt our tranquillity, I can eaſily comprehend; but, that we ſhould join hands with them, againſt ourſelves, is, I confeſs, a ſpecies of infatuation above my utmoſt capacity. That the object of this country's unmerited diſapprobation, is incapable

incapable of infringing the minuteſt ſtipulation, this country has abundantly experienced: but what ſecurity, my good Harry, can our malecontents obtain, that their favourite fugitive will be equally tenacious of his faith and engagements? Mr. Arundel, by ſignificant ſhrugs and a peculiar animation of aſpect, perfectly ſubſcribed to all his lordſhip's arguments, though the ſucceeding moment found him principal agent on the oppoſite ſide the queſtion.

Rebellion having once erected its ſtandard, ſoon became formidable. A diſorderly ſet of troops, under the conduct of an unpracticed leader, were advancing into the very heart of the kingdom; but it was not thoſe undiſciplined troops that ſtruck the panic; it was an apprehended reinforcement from abroad, that terrified the friends of liberty, the friends of religion. The Earl of Windham was amazingly active in the Stewart intereſt;

nay, he was, indeed, almoſt the only Engliſh nobleman that was ſteady to his principles: fear or conviction operating ſo powerfully on every other heart, that though a young man had been invited, and incited by the warmeſt encouragements, to reſume the claim of his anceſtors, that young man was left, on his arrival in a ſtrange land, to diſtreſs and diſcomfiture.

But, notwithſtanding Lord Churchill's ſentiments ſecured him from all political engagements, his humanity would not ſuffer him to be an unconcerned ſpectator of their effects. Immediately on the unhappy *adventurer's* defeat at the battle of Culloden, dejected, broken-hearted, and friendleſs, he was ſought out by that young nobleman, from the moſt exalted motives. His religion, his precarious claim, the miſeries he had brought upon a deluded people, were, in this exigence, wholly forgotten, and alive

alive only to his misfortunes, his lordſhip's utmoſt abilities were exerted for their relief; by his humane hand was he conducted ſafely to a ſhip, in which he embarked from a country, where he had repaired on the ſtrongeſt ſolicitations, and where he had been moſt cruelly abandoned by his partiſans.

This generous purpoſe effected, Lord Churchill, happy in his own conſciouſneſs, returned to the habitation of his father.

CHAP. III.

BY ſome extraordinary means or other, Lord Churchill's extraordinary act of benevolence and humanity reached the knowledge of that family wherein Laurentia had found an aſylum. Her conſtitution was far from being in the vigour, health, innocence, and peace had found it; and ſhe hourly trembled for the fate of that child, that was at once the object of her horror and tenderneſs. Though ſhe herſelf would have periſhed, rather than have derived ſubſiſtence from that ſource, ſhe knew the Vicar was a riſing man;—and, as it was impoſſible to pronounce for the choice of the unjudging and unintelligent, ſhe at laſt perſuaded herſelf, that ſhe ought to give the child a chance, for ſtriking him at ſome future hour with conviction and repentance, and reaping the benefit of his poſſeſſions. Having revolved this idea

idea in her mind for ſome time, it became confirmed into an idea of an abſolute duty, —though it muſt be confeſſed that that would never have been the caſe, if the appointment of an American government had not compelled her to either quit a moſt eligible ſituation, or tear herſelf from maternal attentions. Lord Churchill, as fame will tranſpire, appeared a fit inſtrument for her deſired purpoſe—to him, for the ſake of the cauſe ſhe had at heart, whatever ſentiments ſhe might inſpire him with, of her ſeeming guilt, ſhe reſolved to conceal the deep-laid villainy of the father, leſt the innocent ſon ſhould be a ſufferer.

Having made it her buſineſs, though not apparently, to enquire into his connexions, ſhe ſoon diſcovered, that he occaſionally viſited at no great diſtance from where ſhe lived; a man hired for the purpoſe brought her intelligence when

he was expected; nor did ſhe fail to prepare herſelf for the trying interview.

Early one morning, as Lord Churchill was, agreeable to his cuſtom, going to walk in the garden, he was informed, that a decent, though inferior perſon, intreated to ſpeak to him;—the ear of goodneſs is ever open—he flew to learn what generous or humane action was within his power, with as much eagerneſs, as many would have betrayed to eſcape every diſtreſsful application.

My lord, ſaid the poor girl, confidence ſuch as I have aſſumed admits of no apology.—You know the Vicar of Bray—a fine, but wretched boy, not capable of providing for himſelf, has the tendereſt of claims upon him;—but I, no leſs culpable in the firſt than ſucceeding

ing inſtance, have, by my management, ſecreted him hitherto from his knowledge; nor am I certain, that my teſtimony would now be ſufficient to obtain him the eſſential protection of infancy. Would your lordſhip but condeſcend to ſee him, his helpleſs condition muſt ſearch your heart, and, in return for the ſervices *he* might receive, the mother, as you cannot but deſpiſe her, will, from this hour, ceaſe to profeſs herſelf ſuch, and the poor boy be diſpoſed of juſt as you may ſee beſt.

Lord Churchill was equally ſurpriſed at the addreſs, expreſſions, and mode of proceeding in the woman before him.—There is ſomething ſo ſingular, madam, ſaid he, (having recovered himſelf) in the affair that I own, I feel myſelf inclined to comply with your wiſhes—tell me where I ſhall find the little innocent—to refuſe him the kind offices of humanity, would

be doubly cruel, becauſe—I have, however, no right to ſit in judgement upon the ſelf-accuſed—let me have a direction to your child, and if a few guineas will—

I *feel* the charitable meaning of your words, but have not one neceſſity to plead.—I ſhall leave England in a few weeks, and have only to add, that if any turn in life ſhould enable me to explain myſelf more clearly, without injuring where I ought to ſave, you ſhall hear of me again, otherwiſe, the firſt will be the laſt perſonal trouble I ſhall give you.

Lord Churchill could not ſuppreſs his curioſity with reſpect to beholding his young dependent. He therefore, early the next morning, paid a viſit to the nurſe, and clapping a handſome fee into her hand, entertained himſelf with contemplat-

templating the beauty of a countenance, where ſweetneſs and expreſſion were irreſiſtibly blended; above two hours did he indulge himſelf beyond whatever can be imagined or deſcribed—to cultivate the tender mind—to lead on the deſerving to reputation and happineſs, appeared to him the higheſt of mental gratifications, and he ſoon conſidered himſelf as the obliged party, from repeated viſits, and no leſs repeated careſſes. The boy, now turned of nine years old, was by no means deficient in tokens of love and gratitude.—He was put to a public ſchool, accommodated in quite a new ſtile, and the appellation of *little friend*, fondly beſtowed upon him by his good-natured benefactor.

If keeping the mother's ſecret would have been a diſadvantage to the child, it muſt not have been lodged in Lord Churchill's breaſt; but as he could not

ſee the difference between his taking care of an object that delighted him, or giving him up to the care of an, at beſt, uncertain father, except, that in the former inſtance, the child would retain a known good, in the latter, acquire a precarious one; he was reſolved never to reveal it, unleſs upon ſome uncommon emergency.

The mother continued in England, until perfectly ſatisfied of the ſucceſs of her innocent ſcheme, and then, with a heart at eaſe, embarked for Jamaica, as her departure could be productive of no calamity to the lovely child, who had the misfortune to owe his exiſtence to her uncommon filial attention.

The nurſe would have been very malicious if ſhe had had the power, for ſhe was really fond of the boy, and regretted his loſs, which ſhe imputed to the pride

pride inſtead of friendſhip of his Lordſhip, but as that gentleman's age would not admit of a ſcandalous conſtruction, ſhe was obliged to ſit down unrevenged.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE blow the rebels had ſuſtained, having either cooled their courage, or convinced their underſtandings, produced a calm that was but ill-ſuited to my uncle's reſtleſs ſpirit. The Culloden hero was now the general idol. Lord Churchill, from principle, publicly declared in his favour, but, from the apprehenſion of injuring his temporal intereſts, though he more than once bowed his knee, Harry Arundel's voice was never diſtinguiſhed amongſt the adoring multitude.

Mr. Windham, whoſe vivacity was ever hurrying him into ſcrapes, from which nothing but the ingenuity of my uncle could extricate him, contrived, however, to find him a new employment.

One morning, by way of frolick, having prevailed upon Lord Churchill to accompany him, he gave the politicians the ſlip, and putting himſelf and couſin into the Windſor machine, paid a viſit to the metropolis, and was re-conveyed to the foreſt in the evening. But moſt unfortunately, even in that ſhort abſence, both the young gentlemen contracted impreſſions, that were not altogether ſo conſiſtent with their repoſe. Love had ever been with Mr. Windham an ideal paſſion—nay, it was his *grand fort* when diſpoſed for mirth and witticiſm—a mere ſtage-coach adventure taught him a very different leſſon, and awakened ſuſceptibilities on his companion's part, which, till then, had been unknown to him.

In the corner of the carriage was ſeated a ſweet girl, in all the bloom of eighteen;—her unaffected innocence, her amiable reſerve, the elegance of her perſon, and the elegance of her ſentiments,

ments, (for ſhe was, on ſome occaſions, unavoidably drawn into converſation) filled each of their breaſts with involuntary admiration. Confident and voluble as Mr. Windham had always found himſelf when in the company of the fair, it was very wonderful to him to feel a kind of inſtinctive neceſſity for regulating his expreſſions and behaviour by the niceſt rules of delicacy.—She declined his offered hand at their ſeveral baitings, diſregarded his aſſiduities, and ſmiled contempt upon his compliments.—One moment he adored, the next he curſed her dignity, but reſolved to trace her out to the remoteſt part of the world.

This reſolution was, nevertheleſs, defeated. The unexpected appearance of the earl, as they were alighting at a little inn, obliged them to make a precipitate retreat; and, before they could ſummon my uncle to their aſſiſtance, their beautiful fellow-traveller, and an elderly

woman, who accompanied her, had quitted the place without leaving a ſingle ray of intelligence behind, as they were totally ignorant of her name or deſtination; a ſignificant ſigh only eſcaped Lord Churchill on this diſappointment; but Mr. Windham was inconceivably diſconcerted—his accompliſhments unable to captivate a plebian heart—he vowed revenge, and gave my uncle inſtant commiſſion to ſpare neither induſtry nor expence in diſcovering the fair offender.

Alarmed at this uncommon agitation of Mr. Windham's ſpirits, and the no leſs uncommon earneſtneſs of his ſolicitations, my uncle thought it his duty to compoſe the one, and, if poſſible, elude the other. He therefore entered into a moſt rational as well as conſcientious converſation on the ſubject of ſudden and improper attachments, begging Mr. Windham, while he remembered what

was

was due to his own character, not to forget the honour and humanity to which unprotected innocence had an unqueſtionable claim. Mr. Windham's ear bid defiance to all his arguments; and, at length, finding nothing would recommend him to approbation, but a compliance with his wiſhes, Mr. Arundel ſet to work, nor worked in vain. The deſtruction of the pretty cottager was wholly forgot by theſe gentlemen of *ſpirit*, though the Vicar had his private determinations, never again to proceed the lengths he did upon that occaſion.

The lady found my uncle was not long unconvinced, that her charms had, in no degree, been exaggerated in his friend's deſcription of them, for ſhe was more "than paintings could expreſs, or youthful poets fancy when they love." Her fortune was rather an humble one, though independent; a mother, and a ſiſter ſome years

years younger than herſelf, all the relations ſhe could boaſt; and a refined ſenſibility the amiable (however painful) characteriſtic of her nature.

It has already been obſerved, that Mr. Windham's age and my uncle's were nearly ſimilar:—can it then be extraordinary, that ſo much lovelineſs ſhould inſpire him with ſimilar ſentiments?—next to the little Clara, ſhe was the handſomeſt creature he had ever ſeen; and, as Clara was then only twelve years old, and the ſacred depoſit of friendſhip, he had never dared form a view incompatible with that *noble friend*'s ſchemes reſpecting her;—but in the caſe of Miſs Wentworth, he could not conceive himſelf under the ſame ties, or becauſe he honoured and revered the nephew of his patron, and moſt ſincerely wiſhed to ſerve him, he ſhould not remember, that to give happineſs to his own heart, was a ſtill nearer concern.

Yet

Yet powerful ſoever as he might experience the tender paſſions, he had upon this, as on every other occaſion, a more *politic* motive of action, than would have been prudent to truſt beyond his own breaſt—What might not a handſome wife do for her huſband?—a wife previouſly beloved by the author, the ſource of all his pecuniary bleſſings, and proſpects of advantage; for from the peculiarity of Lord Churchill's diſpoſition, he had ever hailed Mr. Windham as the riſing ſun of his ambition; he therefore exerted all his recommendatory arts—gave the fond apprehenſive mother a generous intimation of the *lively* Mr. Windham's *tendre* for his daughter (conſequently himſelf a claim to her gratitude) and, by a judicious diſplay of his native and acquired excellences, during the *very* period Mr. Windham believed him wholly devoted to his intereſt, he ſo won upon Mrs. Wentworth's approbation, that ſhe conſented to beſtow her Sophia upon him, provided her

the daughter's inclinations were not repugnant to her mother's choice.

Having been thus far ſucceſsful, he was caſting about for a means of turning Mr. Windham's thoughts on ſome new object; when he was agreeably ſurpriſed, to find that work accompliſhed without his aſſiſtance. Mr. Windham had yielded to the perſuaſions of the earl his uncle, to prefer intereſt to love, that earl aſſuring him, that marrying a lady he had provided for him with a no leſs fortune than fifty thouſand pounds, would be the moſt certain ſecurity for little *indulgences*, where, at future periods, the heart might be more immediately concerned; the fifty thouſand pounds was not to be reſiſted, and the union was ſoon after effected, to the general ſatisfaction of all parties.

But however fortunate in this article, my uncle ſoon found his difficulties increaſe

creaſe upon him; Miſs Wentworth's perſonal and mental accompliſhments had made a laſting impreſſion upon Lord Churchill's heart; and now that he found himſelf at liberty by his couſin's inſtability or avarice to declare his ſentiments, he preſſed the Divine ſo cloſely to plead his cauſe with that amiable girl, in the courſe of a little excurſion into which he had purpoſely drawn him, that the *pious* gentleman felt it incumbent upon him, from the friendſhip and gratitude he bore his patron, to acquaint him with the predicament his ſon was under, in conjunction with an humble hint, that ſome more ſuitable alliance would be his beſt protection againſt every ſuch ſpecies of impropriety.

The Earl of Windham received this important piece of intelligence in the very manner my uncle wiſhed; extolled his conduct, promiſed rewards, and invited his ſon home unattended by

Arundel,

Arundel, but without betraying the moſt diſtant inſinuation of his own motives, or Harry's breach of confidence.

Lord Churchill, who knew nothing of diſobedience to the commands of a father, having again and again beſought Harry to be mindful of his happineſs, left him to purſue his own at the expence of truth, of honour, and violated friendſhip. But notwithſtanding Mr. Arundel ventured great lengths, with Mrs. Wentworth, he had never had the temerity *abſolutely* to ſolicit the young lady's acceptance of him. The apprehenſion of Lord Churchill's diſpleaſure, and the influence he might have over Mr. Windham, was no ſmall weight upon his ſpirits. While the earl lived he knew he ſhould not only be juſtified, but applauded for the ſteps he was taking, as with little difficulty he could perſuade his lordſhip that he married Miſs Wentworth merely to preſerve

preſerve *his* family from diſgrace; but the queſtion was how to ſettle the point with his ſucceſſor, in caſe of that mortality alike attendant on the peer and peaſant.

From this embarraſs he was moſt happily, as well as moſt unexpectedly relieved, by a ſummons from the earl to accompany his ſon on an Iriſh expedition.

Lord Windham had it ſeems, according to Harry Arundel's advice, for ſome time caſt about for a daughter-in-law; but as his ſon had, on numberleſs occaſions, betrayed more ſentiment than was conſiſtent with the character of a courtier, he was not without the dread of his making moral objections to receiving the hand of one lady, when his romantic affections were devoted to another; he therefore concluded it the wiſer ſcheme to diſpatch him to Ireland on an important commiſſion, where he had hopes

his

his flame would ſoon expire in diſſipation or vanity.

Mrs. Wentworth was greatly affected at the neceſſity for Mr. Arundel's haſty departure, for ſhe had flattered herſelf with ſecuring a valuable protector, in the huſband and the brother, for both her daughters before the misfortune of a maternal loſs ſhould reach them.—Harry appeared to ſympathize with her in all her concern, though his heart ſecretly exulted in ſo unhoped for an opportunity for forming his train of future action, with reſpect no leſs to ſafety than utility; and having acquitted himſelf in the parting ſcene with his uſual dexterity, and ſufficiently impoſed upon the unſuſpecting natures he had to deal with; he ſoon arrived at the earl's ſeat.

Lord Churchill, who was impatient to enquire after the ſweet girl he had ſeen only to regret, led my uncle the earlieſt

moment poſſible into a private receſs of the garden; where he received ſuch diſcouraging accounts of his labours, as determined him to ceaſe his purſuit; notwithſtanding his partiality, which he miſtook for reaſon, whiſpered, that ſhe, of all women, was beſt calculated to make him happy.

The Vicar had orders to viſit the little *exile* before his embarkation, and prepare her to give his lordſhip the reception of a ſecond father; he did ſo, and as innocence and gratitude are common inhabitants in the ſame boſom, the beautiful child profeſſed herſelf impatient for the interview; the Vicar's malignant ſoul felt a pang, that ſuch an angel ſhould be reſerved for any other *wretch* than himſelf, though utterly incapable of every gleam of principle or compaſſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

IN Ireland, no leſs than England, did my uncle diſtinguiſh himſelf in a moſt extraordinary manner; his friends were numerous, his reputation extenſive; and all effected merely by a happy obſervation of the great St. Paul's maxim, who did not ſcruple (but for a very oppoſite purpoſe to whatever the Vicar's heart was capable of) to *become all things to all men.*

Among many notable ſtrokes, Harry Arundel was at length tempted to perform a maſterly one. The yacht which conveyed Lord Churchill and him to Dublin, had by the conſent of that nobleman ſeveral other paſſengers on board. It was Mr. Arundel's cuſtom to treat all ſtrangers with polite familiarity.—A widow lady profeſſed herſelf

highly pleaſed with his converſation and perſon: the widow lady had fortune and family to recommend her to attention; Miſs Sophia Wentworth only unſubſtantial proſpects: conſequently, though he had made ſome ſtrong declarations of attachment to the ear of her mother, Miſs Sophia *could* never be admitted as an impediment to his paying his devoirs to a new acquaintance. Beſides, was not Miſs Sophia beloved by his young patron? and if the earl was but once out of the way, he did not ſee (in his preſent humour) why the generous wiſh of his heart might not be accompliſhed; or ſhould that amiable young gentleman be born for diſappointment, that diſappointment ought ſurely to reach him unaggravated by the hand of a perfidious friend.

Having made the lady repeated viſits, and obtained *full* ſatisfaction reſpecting her

her circumſtances, he came to a determination to open the affair to Lord Churchill.

Accordingly the very next morning at the breakfaſt table, having adapted his countenance to his ſubject, as he was moſt capable, he began as follows:

Though there is no ſpecies of deceit, my lord, that can be compatible with friendſhip, yet it is not impoſſible but the beſt friends may be induced to temporize on ſome occaſions.

Arundel, returned his lordſhip haſtily, have you ever deceived me?—I own there is one piece of deceit that would nearly affect me.

However your lordſhip may have been deceived, ſaid Mr. Arundel, you have never been injured; to oblige the earl your father, and ſave you from a

matrimonial perſecution; though I diſcovered, I have hitherto concealed the place of your fair fellow-traveller's reſidence.

Be perfectly explicit, cried his lordſhip eagerly, that your preſent ingenuouſneſs may atone for paſt ——

You are warm, my lord, returned Arundel, with the moſt artful compoſure, yet do I by no means merit your diſpleaſure; if I had married the lady in the clandeſtine manner your father ſuggeſted ———

You ſhould, exclaimed his lordſhip, have anſwered it with your life! My lord, my lord, returned Arundel, interrupting him, this is but a poor return for faith, and perhaps hard-practiced ſelf-denial, for Sophia is a moſt divine creature.— I would tell you, that ſo far from meaning to regulate my conduct by Lord Windham's

Windham's wiſhes, or (dealing out a hypocritical ſigh) as I have already obſerved, too probably my own inclinations, I am now on the very point of marrying the widow Fleming.

And ſo Mr. Arundel, ſaid his lordſhip, —but it is no matter—I committed the cauſe of my heart to the care of friendſhip—I have it ſeems, however, very different obligations to that friendſhip, than I either expected or ſought for.

Do we break hands, my lord, demanded Arundel with ſuppreſſed confidence, or is our union to receive additional confirmation? will you accept of my ſervices? be properly cautious, nor, by undue wrath, diſappoint your own wiſhes: the lady ſhall be yours, though I ſhould be the inſtant ſacrifice; for I perceive your father's deviation from the *letter* of juſtice and paternal

tenderneſs will much ſooner be forgiven, than the behaviour of a man who has been cruel, only to be kind.—Ambition is his plea; yet will that ambition with all its effects meet with pardon, while your real, your proved friend remains the object of your reſentment.

Arundel, cryed Lord Churchill, quite melted down to his purpoſe, I am ſatisfied, I thank, I eſteem you ——

Mr. Arundel did not fail to make his advantage of this moment of credulity and honeſt ſoftneſs; he gave the colour he wiſhed to the whole tranſaction; and was ſo far ſucceſsful, that he received the widow in a few weeks from his lordſhip's own hand, as a teſtimony of his reconfirmed cordiality; and the Vicarage of Bray becoming vacant, that young nobleman anxious to atone imaginary injuſtice, obtained it for his favourite;

favourite; who, on his part, affected to receive it with the moſt grateful humility.

Impatient as Lord Churchill was to return to England, he ſuffered himſelf to be governed intirely by the faithful Vicar; who having formed ſome very advantageous as well as political connexions in that country, was for ever furniſhing ſome undeniable plea for their continuance; all of which, however, he conſtantly cloſed with the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that Sophia would be as attainable in a few months as at that actual period; and that both her heart and perſon ſhould infallibly be his.

But notwithſtanding this repeated encouragement, where Sophia was the object, he could have wiſhed Lord Churchill to have made a very different election. Mrs. Arundel had a niece, whoſe accompliſhments were by no means inconſiderable, and whoſe perſon was

really charming.—A title has an agreeable ſound:—My niece Lady Churchill was what this kind relation wiſhed to have it in her power to pronounce, nor was Miſs Needham either ill inſtructed or deficient on her part.

His lordſhip, however, had a mind incapable of being ſubdued by ſuperficial perfections; he treated Miſs Needham with infinite politeneſs, but evinced the impoſſibility of her exciting his admiration; yet, as whilſt he was unmarried, they did not chuſe to deſpair, they choſe to preſerve him in that unengaged ſtate to the laſt practicable moment. The Vicar, who never ſaw a woman without forming deſigns upon her, nor never ſucceeded in his attempts without abandoning her to the complicated miſeries of diſtreſs, poverty, guilt and diſgrace, could not ſecure himſelf from ſome vague undigeſted ſchemes with reſpect to his lively relation; but as the chances

chances were againſt him, he contented himſelf for the preſent, with only promoting her viſiting England, a point that he had no difficulty in carrying, as it was previouſly ſettled by the ladies, that they would not part on that ſide the water. As Miſs Needham's fortune was ſmall, her vanity was greatly mortified at the apprehenſion of not appearing to ſuch advantage in the Engliſh *beau monde* as ſhe could wiſh; but her uncle underſtanding her diſtreſs, repreſented it ſo ludicrouſly to his lordſhip, that an elegant and nobly preſented compliment was the conſequence, and ſhe enabled to figure away to her utmoſt ambition. Many people would call theſe little fineſſes by a reproachful name; but the Vicar, and, after the Vicar's good example, all his family were ſuperior to thoſe ridiculous feelings, ſenſibility and ſentiment are productive of; they did not take the airy for the ſubſtantial, or gratify their imaginations with fairy

dreams. I ſhall not, however, preſume to enter the young lady's wardrobe, though I own I have a peculiar pleaſure in diſplaying his lordſhip's munificence, or ſwell out a ſingle page of this important hiſtory with a catalogue of female finery; but on the other hand, I could not have anſwered it to my principles as a faithful hiſtorian, to have omitted a circumſtance that throws ſo much light into all the characters of this triumvirate, and muſt be exemplary to generations yet unborn. Would we teach the arts of proſperity to our children, we muſt teach them to ſubdue every idea of refinement, and to conſider nothing mean that is profitable, nothing contemptible but a deſertion of their own intereſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE Earl of Windham did not fail to wait upon his intended victim at the time appointed; he had not then ſeen her for near three years, and it was with inexpreſſible delight and aſtoniſhment that he beheld her increaſed perfections.

She was now entering her fifteenth year, tall, and finely accompliſhed. She had the artleſsneſs, the ſenſibility, to bedew the hand of her beloved father's patron with her tears; the tears of filial tenderneſs, the tears of genuine gratitude.—Lord Windham was charmed with her ſimplicity; and intreated that every ſhadow of anxiety might be for ever baniſhed from her gentle boſom: that in him ſhe ſhould find a full compenſation for all the loſſes ſhe had ſuſtained; for that the protection of a father,

father, and the fond indulgence of a mother, ſhould be all united in the character of friendſhip; nor would his fortune be ever truly enjoyed but when employed in her ſervice. He expreſſed no ſmall approbation of the Vicar's choice of ſo happy a retirement for his little *charge*, and begged ſhe would accuſtom herſelf to communicate all her wiſhes, to ſave him from the painful apprehenſion of her having one wiſh ungratified.

The more he converſed with his *Clara*, as he repeatedly called her, the more he found he was eſcaping from himſelf.—It was abſurd, it was contemptible to think of marrying; and yet, could the whole world produce ſuch a counteſs as he had it in his power to create?—In ſhort, there was ſuch an air of virtue around, that his heart inſtinctively acknowledged its divine influence; the idea of impoſſibility deterred him from all

all attempts; and he vowed when he took his leave, not to add ſo heinous a ſin to his *catalogue* as the deſtruction of nature's moſt finiſhed work.

Fraught with this generous reſolution, as the pride of nobility taught him to deem it, not once recollecting that the title of counteſs could ill balance his age and infirmities, and more eſpecially to the unaſpiring and cultivated mind, he impatiently wiſhed for the Vicar's advice and aſſiſtance; and the Vicar having exhauſted his whole fund of delays, was not able much longer to prevent his reviſiting Berkſhire: but that reverend gentleman, in his way to Lord Windham's ſeat, took it in his head *ex officio*, whilſt Lord Churchill ſtepped aſide to exchange a few friendly ſalutes with an old ſchool-fellow, to look in upon the lovely girl.

He found her improved beyond his utmoſt expectations; nay, he ſoon found alſo that it was impoſſible for either his wiſdom or his piety to ſecure him from impreſſions wholly incompatible with his truſt.—Gallantry, next to avarice, was however, as I have already obſerved, Harry Arundel's predominant paſſion, and he vainly urged all that propriety and principle (a ſpecies of propriety and principle little inferior to infernal) could ſuggeſt to retain his faith, though by the ſacrifice of his moſt darling inclination; Harry Arundel's darling inclination would not be ſo *poorly* ſilenced; and he at length yielded to the more powerful ſpring of action, and reſolved by ſome method or other, to defeat the evil deſigns of his patron, for the *good* purpoſe of carrying the recent ones formed by his own baſeneſs into execution. But as he was ſenſible that it was a work of danger, he prudently determined that it

it ſhould be a work of deliberation; and therefore made no other advantage of this interview, than taking the meaſure of the ſoul he had to deal with; whoſe many fine lines were apparent, from being ſtrongly marked by the finger of virtue; but if delicacy produced nice apprehenſion, ingenuouſneſs made a bleſſed opening for deceit; and as to undertake was but another name with him for accompliſhing, he was far from quitting her in the torments of deſpair.

In a ſhort time after his arrival, he thought proper to wait upon Mrs. Wentworth, who received him with the greateſt pleaſure, and declared herſelf ready to confirm their former treaty, and receive for her ſon-in-law, the man who had abuſed her confidence.

After a very artful converſation, in which the Vicar had lamented that our inclinations were not in our own power, he

he began at length to come more immediately to the point. Notwithſtanding, my dear madam, ſaid he, I was ſo happy as to recommend myſelf to your approbation, it was not poſſible for me not to perceive long before my embarkation for Ireland, that Miſs Sophia's ſentiments of me were not equally flattering. It has coſt me infinite pain, but what is it we will not accompliſh for thoſe we truly love? to know myſelf not the man of her preference was ſufficient to determine me to return her friend alone; ſhe may now, my good madam, behold me without apprehenſion,—the conflict is paſt—the formidable lover, as ſhe I dare ſay conſidered me, totally ſubdued:—to deliver her delicate mind from the ſoft perſecution of perſuaſion, and ſave her a compliance that would have wounded her peace (all unable as I was to anſwer for my own reſolution) I have, by uniting myſelf to another, ſecured us both from danger.

Mrs.

Mrs. Wentworth, in whoſe breaſt artifice and deceit had never dwelt, received this information with a tear of regret;—the more ſhe admired his generoſity and diſintereſtedneſs, the more ſhe was concerned that her daughter had loſt him; but that ſhe might ſpare him a painful participation of her diſappointment, ſhe called the daughters of her heart to welcome their common friend.

The Vicar was not in any degree miſtaken, in regard to Miſs Wentworth's impreſſions of him; her ſoul refuſed acquaintance with him; but ſuch was the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, that however her ſenſibility might have been wounded, ſhe could not have oppoſed maternal authority; and as her mother's voice was her actual deſtiny, had that mother decreed, ſhe had become his victim.

Miſs

Miſs Louiſa Wentworth, though equally dutiful and amiable as her ſiſter, had a vivacity that made her ſee things through a very different medium. Without the ſmalleſt portion of acrimony, ſhe had a propenſity to rally upon almoſt every occaſion, or, as ſhe expreſſed it, to cheriſh the ſenſe of ſatisfaction, and laugh off the evil that was inevitable. Her perſon was pleaſing and genteel, but the ſmall-pox had made ſad ravage in her features; the lovely eye-brow was rooted up, the ornamental eye-laſh no more; nor could the dimple be eaſily diſtinguiſhed from an unkind indentation; yet were the graces of her mind capable of giving expreſſion to plainneſs, and an air of ſweetneſs to the rough workings of diſeaſe. With this young lady the Vicar was no favourite; ſhe fancied, unable as ſhe was to aſſign a reaſon, that there was ſomething more about him than mere honeſty and politeneſs, and had left nothing unſaid to increaſe

increaſe her ſiſter Sophia's natural diſinclination to an union with him. Miſs Wentworth received the news of the Vicar's marriage with a ſatisfaction ſhe could not conceal; her accent, her glowing cheek, bore too faithful teſtimony againſt her; and the Vicar's pride, inconceivably wounded by ſuch apparent contempt, laid the foundation of enmity and revenge in his baleful boſom, which he determined at all hazards to gratify.

Louiſa had conſtrained herſelf during the Vicar's viſit from all tokens of exultation; but the moment he departed, ſhe broke forth according to the dictates of her heart; thanked him a thouſand and a thouſand times in her Sophia's name for his unexampled generoſity; humouroufly condoled with herſelf on being deprived of ſuch a brother, and placed his conduct in ſo ridiculous a point of view, that even his hardened cheek muſt have experienced a ſuffuſion,

if

if ſhe had indulged her inclination in his preſence. Mrs. Wentworth could not be very angry with the ſprightly, well-meaning creature; for though ſhe often wiſhed her leſs volatile, as ſhe knew it was impoſſible to render her more innocent, ſhe ſoon huſhed every little diſſatisfaction into peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

MRS. Arundel's mind was moſt aptly calculated for her huſband's purpoſes; in party affairs the intelligence he would not appear to receive was dealt forth at her toilet, and by her communicated at convenient periods; he was not one of thoſe moroſe huſbands who deny their wives the liberty of ſpeech. Mrs. Arundel would, on every ſuch occaſion, not only deliver her own opinion, but ſift out the Vicar's ſentiments, and make ſuch reports to her friends as were moſt recommendatory of their mutual intereſt.

But in the midſt of all his political engagements, the little Clara was not forgot by him; he correſponded with her as a kind of father; entertained and inſtructed her in the ſame inſtant; and whatever was the ſubject, ſuch a ſpirit

of benevolence and generoſity ran through his epiſtles that ſhe thought ſhe could never ſufficiently honour and venerate him. Lord Windham would frequently converſe with him concerning her, but notwithſtanding his lordſhip had wiſhed his return for the very purpoſe of conſulting him, and reſolved not to conceal the minuteſt ſentiment of his heart, the apprehenſion of his ridicule, and the apprehenſion of the world's cenſure, would not permit him to be quite explicit with reſpect to his intentions.

The Vicar, who had ſettled it in his own breaſt, to *ruin*, under the maſk of the moſt exalted friendſhip, ſoon formed his plan, and only waited for a happy opportunity of carrying it into execution. But whilſt politics and gallantry thus engroſſed the minds of the Vicar and his patron, Lord Churchill's thoughts were far otherwiſe exerciſed; unable to gain their point where their niece was concerned,

concerned, they at length condeſcended to oblige him in his own way.—The lovely Sophia was to be invited by Mrs. Arundel on a London journey, and that good-natured lady did not ſcruple to promiſe him he ſhould enjoy as many *tete-a-tetes* with her as his heart could wiſh; for as ſhe had received her huſband's commands, ſo ſhe had not failed to inſinuate herſelf into Mrs. Wentworth's good graces; and as for the young ladies, from judging of her heart by their own, they really beheld her with infinite approbation.

But however Mrs. Wentworth might be delighted with the repeated viſits ſhe received from Mrs. Arundel (adapted as her behaviour and converſation were to the purpoſe of captivating her confidence and good-opinion) ſuch viſits were always conſidered by Mrs. Arundel as ſo many inſtances of *duty* and ſubmiſſion to the *will* of her huſband; nor did ſhe

fail to exact a price for every ſuch act of compulſion and ſelf-denial. There were ſome ſubjects upon which ſhe ſeemed born to ſhine, though without the ſupport and aſſiſtance of the Vicar ſhe would have made a rather bad figure upon others: one of which was the town and the town's amuſements. The young ladies were entertained, notwithſtanding they were too equal minded to be elated with her animated deſcriptions, and were ſufficiently appriſed of her intention, of giving them, at a future period, an opportunity of judging for themſelves—they therefore made a polite return to her application for the pleaſure of their company, and, with their mother's perfect concurrence, entered very ſpiritedly into the little neceſſary preparations for their journey.

My children, ſaid Mrs. Wentworth in the moment of bidding adieu, Mrs. Arundel's known prudence, and your eſtabliſhed principles of reaſon and propriety,

priety, ſilence every apprehenſion I ſhould otherwiſe experience for the youthful mind on emerging into life—you will be in no danger of erroneous impreſſions—ſplendor will never deceive you into the idea, that ſplendor is the only *good* of human exiſtence—you will always remember, that it is rectitude of manners, and a conſcience void of offence, that can alone ſecure us from the pangs of ſelf-contempt, the intolerable miſery of ſelf-condemnation.

As to attachments natural to your time of life, I own I ſhall hold myſelf prepared for the natural intelligence; but never, my children, hope to allure me by the parade of titles or dignities; you are enabled by your education to make a valuable figure in an humble ſphere—believe me, was it even poſſible for your little attractions to fix the heart of a man greatly your ſuperior, you

would be far from taſting that felicity moderate circumſtances can give.

Sophia and her ſiſter arrived in Pall-Mall. Lord Churchill's impatience to ſee and converſe with the former would not ſuffer him to defer his viſit beyond the enſuing morning. Mrs. Arundel introduced him as her moſt particular friend, and beſpoke that kind of conſideration for him, which his apparent merit ſeemed to intitle him to. Louiſa perceived a ſomething of confuſion in her ſiſter's behaviour that ſhe could not account for until ſhe diſcovered that this was one of the young fellow-travellers ſhe had ſo frequently heard her mention, and ſincerely wiſhed that their mutual approbation might not be productive of unhappy conſequences. She had heard and read of the prejudices of the polite world, and as her fellow-traveller proved to be a man of faſhion, and her ſiſter's fortune and connexions were barely out

of the common caſt, together with her mother's admonition, that ſtill vibrated on her ear, ſhe trembled leſt a train of difficulties and diſappointments ſhould enſue.

Lord Churchill, had he wiſhed to conceal the joy he derived from this long-hoped-for interview, would have found himſelf very unequal to the taſk. Diſſimulation had ever been in his idea too *unmanly* a practice for him ever to have been guilty of it; and we well know that all firſt attempts are apt to betray themſelves. He treated Miſs Louiſa with the politeneſs that was his characteriſtic, liſtened unreluctantly to many ſtrokes of her vivacity, but it was ſtill apparent which was with him the principal object of conſideration; nor was Miſs Wentworth ever more agreeably flattered during her whole exiſtence.

When he took his leave, Louiſa declared him to be a man after her own heart, rational, decent, intelligent and entertaining. There can be nothing comparable to him, added ſhe, in the polite circle, to which we are to be introduced—but yet he wants—what ſay you Sophia—in my opinion he wants animation. I could indeed call ſuch a man brother with delight, but there are ſtill many requiſites wanting to conſtitute the creature I could acknowledge for *my* lord.

Miſs Wentworth bluſhed, and gently chiding her ſiſter, for what ſhe called undue livelineſs, endeavoured to change the ſubject.

Lord Churchill, ſaid Mrs. Arundel, is a nobleman of moſt ſingular ſentiments—an enemy to all the forms and ceremonies in ſo much repute with the great world—he has a taſte for retirement, doats upon little family parties, and I dare

dare promiſe you will frequently make one at our ſocial fire-ſide: but perhaps, ladies, on your introduction to gay ſcenes, your ſentiments may be ſo changed, as to render him an ineligible companion. Whilſt you continue at my houſe, you muſt continue perfect miſtreſſes of your own inclinations, nor though it might be my misfortune to have a boor for my relation, or a fanatic for my friend, be taxed with the company or converſation of the one or the other.

Do not alarm yourſelf, madam, ſaid Miſs Louiſa, however unſuitable he may prove to my giddy humour, be aſſured he will at all times be a moſt acceptable viſitant with my ſiſter; to be demure, is with her only another name for being amiable; and beſides it muſt be allowed, that the peculiarities of reaſon and good-ſenſe will not fail of many admirers.

Miſs Wentworth, from the effect her ſiſter's raillery reſpecting Lord Churchill had on her heart, began to wiſh ſhe had been ſpared the rencounter. As to inſtantaneous attachments, or what is called *love* at *ſight*, ſhe held it in the higheſt ridicule, and the ſoft remembrance ſhe had retained of her admired fellow-traveller's merits, was known by her only by the denomination of juſtice and diſcernment. Had ſhe herſelf indeed been born to the firſt diſtinctions, ſhe could not have thought it condeſcenſion when forming a friendſhip with ſo worthy an object as Lord Churchill appeared, whatever might be his rank in life; but the opinion her humility, and her modeſty induced her to entertain of her own deſervings, no leſs induced her to conceive the caſe quite altered where he had the ſuperiority.

The Vicar would frequently congratulate himſelf on all his ſucceſſes, but on

on none ſo much as the ſucceſs of his fineſſe where Miſs Wentworth was concerned: and his buſy ſoul, which could but be ill ſatisfied with one purſuit, was ever inſtigating him to great ſchemes, even to the violation of every law of hoſpitality; but he beyond meaſure dreaded the penetration of the lively Louiſa, in whoſe ſight he had ſome reaſon to apprehend he was not the moſt amiable of men.

He had, it was true, long reſolved that the little Clara ſhould not eſcape him, but then he could not at the ſame time but conceive, that an amour with his fair viſitant would have its charms, or, at leaſt, if ſhe ſhould once become a *wife* he might ſafely recommend himſelf, under the double ſanction of the huſband and the mother's *friend*—for it was one great article of his creed, that women would not heſitate to

err, if every probability of detection was removed to a proper diſtance.

Miſs Wentworth, who, from the inſtant the Vicar acknowledged himſelf a married man, conceived her deliverance complete, for ſhe had no notion that gallantry was an univerſal paſſion, now converſed with him upon the eaſieſt terms—but whilſt her heart was unagitated by fear, it was not a ſtranger to ſofter ſenſations—Lord Churchill engroſſed her whole thoughts—his perſon, his principles, were equally high in her approbation; and ſhe could not help dwelling upon the eligibility of ſuch an union, even in her mother's ſight; that mother at whoſe diſpoſal ſhe ever held herſelf.

Lord Churchill, too well acquainted with the foibles of his father's character, found himſelf totally at a loſs how to proceed.

proceed.—Miſs Wentworth, though ſo perfectly unexceptionable in his eſtimation, he could not but be ſenſible was devoid of all thoſe eſſentials his father held ſo ſacred—a plebeian of obſcure education, and unſupported by even the remoter merit of noble alliances. The Vicar, however, no ſooner perceived than he calmed all theſe kind of emotions in his breaſt, by convincing him, that though Lord Windham's peace ought to be dear to him, it was unworthy a man of underſtanding to be tender of his caprices—that a private marriage would anſwer every deſireable purpoſe, by preſerving him the moſt amiable of her ſex, and ſecuring the earl from all diſſatisfaction; and he took upon him to engage for the young lady, and the young lady's family, to be ſatisfied with conſcious RIGHT, whilſt he took care that inſinuated WRONG ſhould ſatisfy his old patron: in a word, his ſcheme was to communicate an impreſſion where ne-

ceſſary, that Lord Churchill had perſuaded Miſs Wentworth to conſent to a faſhionable engagement, the only impreſſion that could, in his opinion, temper Lord Windham's pride, reſtrain his reſentment, and enſure the happineſs of his ſon. Lord Churchill thanked him a thouſand times for the ſuggeſtion, ſaid he would turn it over in his mind, and if it was his *only* reſource, endeavour to reconcile himſelf to it.

Mrs. Arundel, fond of obliging the great world, would fain have introduced the pretty *payſannes* to the firſt circles, not doubting but their ſimplicity, however tempered by elegance, and confined notions of life, however in conjunction with reaſon, would afford no ſmall entertainment, where both the one and the other, from not being underſtood, were conſtantly confounded with want of breeding and ignorance: but Miſs Louiſa was not to be led about without a mean-

a meaning ſo eaſily as ſhe had imagined. Splendor and parade, inſtead of ſtriking her with awe, were objects of her ridicule; nor was ſhe to be prevailed upon to take more than a ſuperficial view of what ſhe declaredly deſpiſed. The folly of faſhion, and the immorality of gaming, were topics on which ſhe abundantly ſhone, and no leſs abundantly treated, whilſt the wretched Mrs. Arundel hung the head from conſcious inferiority and conſcious meanneſs, without daring to vindicate what ſhe did not dare to renounce; for ſhe was an equal ſlave to the humour of the times, as unfit to aſſign even the ſmalleſt reaſon, or excuſe for their abſurdities.

And ſo, Miſs Louiſa would often ſay, this is life it ſeems; to ſuffer every ſentimental faculty to remain unexerted, and ſubmit to the unreſtrained dominion of fancy and caprice. I viſited London, not ſo much for the purpoſe of gratifying the

the eye as the ear. Amongſt all ranks of people I had flattered myſelf with ſtill attending to the uſeful ſubject, in order that having an opportunity my theory might be corrected by the arguments of experience. It is true, I had no wiſh to mix with pedants, but muſt confeſs I have a kind of inſtinctive reverence for philoſophers.—Your light themes, your whipped ſyllabubs may do very well for the infant imagination, but to the mind of maturity ſomething more muſt be added to ſtamp it with the title of converſation. Except Lord Churchill, and he is rather a companion for my gentle ſiſter than the vivacity and honeſt inquiſitiveneſs of my heart, I have yet ſcarcely met with a rational creature; and you muſt conſider, Mrs. Arundel, ſhe would add, we plain girls have larger demands than the fair daughters of the creation; for unleſs we are allowed to think, and enjoy a reciprocation of ſentiment with tolerably intelligent animals, from whence are we to derive our grati-

gratifications? The ſoothing whiſper, the involuntary mark of diſtinction, are what we are forbid to taſte, and though it is ſufficient for Miſs Sophia to be ſhewn to be approved, your friend Louiſa muſt have other attention paid her, or ſhe will have viſited the metropolis only for mortification.

Mrs. Arundel could with difficulty refrain on ſome occaſions, from telling her ſprightly viſitor, that it was only for people of rank and fortune to indulge themſelves (as it was only people of rank and fortune that could be tolerated) in whimſical refinement; that cards and dreſs were the felicities of life, and that a pretty idiot was a more valuable, becauſe a more admirable part of the creation, than the moſt witty or ſenſible of the human ſpecies: nay, indeed, that underſtanding in a woman, ſo far from being deemed an accompliſhment amongſt the polite, it was decryed as the greateſt of incon-

inconvenencies; an impediment to gaiety, a reſtraint upon converſation, and a formidable infringement on the ſmartneſs of the one ſex, and the eaſe of the other: for her part, ſhe would frequently bleſs herſelf, that ſhe had merely a common capacity; could diſcover and promote her own intereſt, without too nicely attending to the means; that ſhe was not a dupe to her own generoſity, or ſo weak as to be governed by ſentiment; that if ſhe found a well illuminated apartment, and ample range of card tables, ſhe had no void of far fetched ſenſibility to fill up, nor was ſo fooliſhly critical as to ſuffer her happineſs to depend upon the religion, education, nay, *pure* fame of her company.

Mr. Windham treated Louiſa with great complaiſance, but evaded engaging with her upon all occaſions. He was no ſtranger to the ſtrength of her endowments, nor the humanity of her heart; but

but as it is the keeneſt weapon that cuts the deepeſt, her queſtions were not ſuch as he choſe to anſwer, or her obſervations calculated to either flatter his head or compliment his heart. She was for ſincerity and conſiſtency, thoſe moſt repugnant of all articles to the taſte and practice of a courtier, and was for examining the delights of vanity, impropriety and idle gallantry by the ſtandards of principle, of good-ſenſe, delicacy and honour. Mrs. Windham could have been very fond of her, but her huſband peremptorily prohibited all intimacy, rather chuſing his wife ſhould have the ideas of cards and routs, than learn to ſit in judgement upon his conduct, or by her diſcretion, forbearance, and amiable patience awaken the public to the great errors of his character. He conſidered an unreflecting, an extravagant wife, as the happieſt of foils, and an unſentimental one as the beſt of all conveniencies. If his lady had been faultleſs, would ſhe

not

not have deſpiſed the *etiquette* of his family, and the little tyrannies of his temper? but conſcious that all could not be juſtified on her part, ſhe unreluctantly abated much on his, and conceived his toleration of her gaieties as an obligation, when it was merely to anſwer private purpoſes of his own that he had hurried her into them.

But, though Miſs Louiſa was far from ſeeking or hoping to make a conqueſt, a gentleman of large fortune and no inconſiderable merit became ſtrangely attached to her.

I have, Mrs. Arundel, he would frequently ſay in her abſence, met with beauty that was irreſiſtible, and wit that was entertaining, but there is a purity of ſentiment, and a humanity of diſpoſition in this young lady that is beyond meaſure eſtimable. I have ſeveral times attempted to inſinuate my extreme approbation,

probation, but ſhe has ever rallied me from my purpoſe, and the other day declared, that there was a formality in love that ſhe had no idea of; that friendſhip was the darling inhabitant of her boſom, and that whoever honoured her ſo far as to make her friendly attachment to them of conſequence, muſt pay court to her ſenſibility without alarming her pride. She did not think it impoſſible for her to be an object of good-natured attention, but ſhe would never forgive the man that could attempt to perſuade her ſhe was an object of admiration.

But, notwithſtanding Miſs Louiſa was ſo averſe to liſtening to this gentleman's profeſſions, her perſon was exactly ſuited to his taſte: he had experienced the felicity of being married to a beauty;—your beauties are very agreeable *ſpectacles*, but, in general, very *deſpicable* wives; all domeſticality was beneath her conſideration, and all refinement above her capacity;

capacity; airy and uſeleſs ſhe glided through exiſtence, and left an impreſſion upon her huſband's heart, not much to the advantage of the *ſuperlatively* fair. Mrs. Arundel, whoſe complaiſance was unbounded, undertook to promote his intereſt with the lady; aſſured him, from her knowledge of the ſex, that perſeverance and a good eſtate were ſufficient to ſubdue the ſtrongeſt reſolution; and only politely hinted, that if ſhe was but as certain of a handſome preſent on his ſucceſs, as certain that he would ſucceed, ſhe ſhould be apt to congratulate herſelf, as ſhe did him, by anticipation.

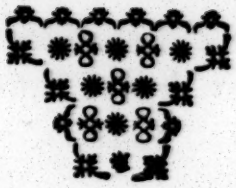
The gentleman did not want for apprehenſion; conſequently, all converſations upon the ſubject terminated to the ſatisfaction of both parties.

Mrs. Arundel was, perhaps, the beſt convenience upon earth, when properly dealt

dealt by. She had in her time contributed to many happy unions, and effected many deſired ſeparations. Widows and widowers, bachelors and maidens, had abundant obligations to her: but if ſhe was frequently mentioned with gratitude, eſteem was the laſt thing that entered the imagination of her favoured friends. She was however too deep a character for the Miſs Wentworths reading; for where appearances were ſatisfactory, they were too innocent to doubt realities, nor did their moſt anxiouſly affectionate mother in the ſmalleſt degree ſuſpect the unfit ſituation her daughters had attained. The Vicar's ſpecious conduct, and the regard he profeſſed for her and her family, would not let her ſuppoſe it poſſible for him to have made a bad choice, or that he was capable of violating in the minuteſt circumſtance, the laws of hoſpitality. It is much to be lamented that goodneſs of heart ſhould be ever the moſt open to abuſe, and

your

your honeſt natures inſtead of engaging protection, only expoſing the poſſeſſor to a thouſand of the moſt ungenereus offices.



CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

LORD Windham, in order to pave the way to his union with his ſweet charge, ſuddenly declared an inclination to retire from the buſy ſcenes of party, and as his nephew was beſt qualified to ſucceed him, he recommended the Vicar as a man of experience and abilities, and the Vicar was accordingly received with pleaſure into Mr. Windham's train.

On the firſt unfolding of the earl's intention to retire from public life, Harry Arundel had frequently caught himſelf balancing in his own mind, whether it was beſt to purſue his original attachments, or ſtrike an amicable league with the houſe of Hanover; but when the earl condeſcended to recommend him in ſuch ſtrong terms to Mr. Windham, he ſoon renounced all thoughts of changing hands, and reconfirmed himſelf in his

his inveteracy to the eſtabliſhed government.

Settled as Mr. Arundel now believed himſelf to be in one invariable courſe of hoſtility with the reigning family, he was continually breaking out into the little joke of, *Where is this Hanover? Where this patrimonial ſpot of ſovereignty?* I have ſearched every map extant, yet am unable to diſcover the ſmalleſt trace of it; a joke that was received with infinite applauſe by his new patron, as his principles were not only ſimilar to his uncle's, but ſupported by him with ſimilar warmth.

In default of male heirs, the title and Windham eſtate was to devolve to this relation; who to an agreeable perſon ſuperadded all the accompliſhments of a great mind, if greatneſs and goodneſs can ſubſiſt independently of each other. But if Mr. Windham was not ſufficiently narrow

narrow or ambitious in his ſentiments, as to envy his couſin's prior claim to the family honours or fortune, he beyond meaſure envied him the opportunities he found he enjoyed by Mrs. Arundel's means of promoting the intereſt of his heart; for however avarice or volatility had in the firſt inſtance prevailed over a hopeleſs paſſion, his heart too abundantly ſubſcribed to Sophia's merits for him to be ſatisfied with his conduct. This was, however, too tender a point to be entered upon by the Vicar, though his penetration was not to be eluded; and he flattered himſelf, that he ſhould find a fit inſtrument in the perſon of his patron, of that revenge he had vowed againſt Miſs Wentworth for her mortifying inſenſibility to all his perfections.

Public diſſatisfactions, ariſing from a long continued and an unſucceſsful war, obliged government to change, if not its meaſures, at leaſt its miniſtry to appeaſe

them. Mr. Windham was now called into a conſiderable employment; and as he was already the repreſentative of a county, and uncommonly eminent for his wiſdom and eloquence, great expectations were formed of the conſequences. Mr. Windham, by an extraordinary piece of fineſſe, having converted his diſaffection to the houſe of Brunſwick into an appearance of patriotiſm, found himſelf ſo oppoſed by the court intereſt in all his ſchemes, and ſo little the favourite of his prince, that no advantage could be derived either to himſelf or the expecting Vicar from his concern in the adminiſtration.

The Vicar, who was deep read in the myſtery of politics, was not however without hope of ſeeing the tide turn intirely in his favour; but, as every event muſt be aſſiſted by ways and means, he perſuaded his patron when he had been only a ſhort time in office to reſign, on an

an opponent's being advanced to a ſuperior poſt to the one he occupied.

Mr. Windham did not heſitate to comply with this advice; and as the ſhadow of an injury wounds frequently as deep as the ſubſtance, this reſignation, with the cauſe, produced the deſired effect in the minds of the people; at the ſame time that it gave the Vicar an opportunity of diſcuſſing, canvaſſing, and largely cenſuring miniſterial tranſactions wherever he came. It was now that continental alliances were firſt ſuggeſted; the critical ſituation of the Hanoverian territories inciting thoſe at the helm to recommend themſelves to their royal maſter, by approving their attention to whatever was dear to him.

The Vicar, who was fond of ſcriptural quotations, from conceiving them capable of ſanctifying miſchievous purpoſes, would frequently exclaim, Woe be to that land

whoſe king is a *foreigner*; when every ſtep ſhall have been taken to defend a ſpot that never was, nor ever can be of the ſmalleſt utility to England, ſhould it ſtill continue in a ſtate of danger, England itſelf will be ſold for its preſervation. The treaty with Pruſſia, the really extraordinary, though, as the miniſtry had managed it, inevitable ſtep, of introducing foreign troops to protect a kingdom which had for ſo many generations been both honoured and revered for the courage and reſolution of its inhabitants, furniſhed theſe malecontents with additional and inconteſtible matter for complaint. The Vicar was indefatigable; all the powers of his eloquence were brought into play, and a general umbrage was the conſequence. The conduct of the preſent day, and the noble ſtands made by our brave anceſtors, was a no leſs mortifying than alarming antitheſis: would they have ſubmitted to be protected by the importation of foreigners?

foreigners? would they have depended upon hirelings for their defence, and tamely beheld their land overſpread by an unknown race? but it was *Hanover* they had to thank for their danger, their indignities, their diſtreſſes; the country had been drained of its natural ſtrength for Hanoverian purpoſes; and thoſe little territories, which, in compariſon with the Britiſh dominions, might be contained in the hollow of the hand, were of tenfold the importance in ſovereign eſtimation to all his other poſſeſſions.

But however unconcerned Mr. Windham might be in the ſcheme of calling in the Heſſian and Hanoverian troops, on a ſtrong preſumption of an invaſion from the French, there were not people wanting to affirm that he had a principal concern in the treaty, which was now worked off as an inſtrument of diſguſt; nor did very many ſcruple to pronounce the German war on future occaſions to

be *his* war.—It is true, he was not publickly known to be in the adminiſtration at that period; but need we be told that advice and conſent, give the man what title you pleaſe, is the criterion? but be that as it may, the following little anecdote muſt not be concealed.

During the grand cabals and miniſterial tyranny of removing all from power that were ſo hardy as to exclaim againſt the court meaſures, the honeſt Vicar, in conjunction with the diſcerning ſpirit of his wife, (who had received a friendly hint to that purpoſe) was convinced that himſelf and patron were on the popular, but not the profitable ſide of the queſtion. On a cloſer and more prudential examination into circumſtances and contingencies, he did not ſcruple to confeſs to this partner of his ſoul, that they had miſtaken the oppoſition; for that when they conceived themſelves only oppoſing the miniſtry, they were oppoſing a ſove-

a ſovereign, who knew not to ſhrink from his reſolutions; and conſequently the queſtion was, merely whether they ſhould perſiſt in an uſeleſs ſelf-denial, or condeſcend to temporize in one ſingle article? a queſtion that was not long in determining; and notwithſtanding the face of things remained unchanged, and that the diſplaced gentlemen found their wonted aſylum with Mr. Windham; the Vicar had by due recourſe to his arts of perſuaſion, of which he was ſo diſtinguiſhed a maſter, brought his patron firſt to deliberate, next to waver, and in the end to reſolve to follow his inſtructions on any application to engage once more in the ſervice of his country.

CHAP. IX.

THE Vicar, notwithſtanding all his public engagements, was in no degree neglectful of his private ones.—Lord Windham had purchaſed a ſeat in another country for the reception of his fair miſtreſs, and turned all his thoughts to the fitting up the apartments with magnificence, and laying out the garden with elegance.

The Vicar, as ambaſſador and plenipo, had ſeveral interviews with Miſs Clara, but inſtead of employing them in the ſervice of his patron, he was only attentive to the advancement of his own intereſt. In the courſe of their converſations, he threw out many little things reſpecting the earl to alarm, and then again, with amazing dexterity, would pay a compliment to his lordſhip's heart ſufficient to ſilence every apprehenſion; but

but ſtill the grand point was to keep her opinion of himſelf in an exalted ſtate, and prepare her, on an exigence, to fly to him for protection. He ſaw the purity of her ſoul too plainly to hope to ſucceed by any other means, therefore thought it would be beſt in the moment that ſhe was to be ſnatched from him for ever (as his marriage was unknown to her) to offer to reſcue her from violation, by becoming her huſband, and leave the reſt to fate. At ſome periods, indeed, he debated whether it would not be ſafeſt to let my lord accompliſh his ſcheme, and ſhare the valuable prize according to common forms; for it was a maxim with him, and perhaps ninety-nine times in a hundred a certain one in caſes of the ſame nature, that the miſtreſs of my lord would unreluctantly be the miſtreſs of my lord's chaplain; but it was too much to behold her given up to another, though for ever ſo ſhort a period, and he reverted to his reſolution of com-

pleting her deſtruction by a leſs violent, though not leſs cruel method.

As theſe abundant concerns would not permit him to be much at home, and Mrs. Arundel had her private viſitants, Lord Churchill and Sophia had many interviews. His abundant accompliſhments were ſtrong advocates for him in the gentle Miſs Wentworth's boſom, nor did ſhe attempt to conceal from her ſiſter that her approbation of him exceeded all ſhe had ever before felt. Louiſa, from the affection ſhe bore her Sophia, was ſorry they had ever emerged from their peaceful retirement; for though the ſtage-coach adventure had made a ſlight impreſſion on Sophia's heart, her happineſs was not endangered, and the remembrance of her agreeable fellow-traveller might, perhaps, have kindly operated as an antidote againſt the ſoft folly of a ſecond *tendre*; but to have that ſpark fanned by the formidable breath

breath of that firſt approved object, to behold, to converſe with him daily, only for the miſery of giving him up at the command of a ſtern father for ever, was what ſhe could not reflect upon either with patience or reſignation.

She once had a notion of making her mother acquainted with the predicament her ſiſter was under, together with all its probable, its formidable contingencies, but then ſhe conſidered that it would be as cruel a ſtroke of kindneſs, as ever had been preached, for that it was not to prevent what had actually happened, but perhaps to render that a calamity, which might, if left to itſelf, work out a very different termination. She therefore, confining both her hopes and her fears to her own boſom, reſolved to wait the event with all imaginable compoſure: nor was her conduct upon the occaſion, either incompatible with prudence, or good-ſenſe.

Mrs. Wentworth would have been rendered unhappy, without the power or poſſibility of being ſerviceable; and the ſelf-conſtraint of her ſiſter's heart, beyond expreſſion, aggravated: for as ſhe could perceive that ſhe avoided all mention of Lord Churchill's name, except when ſhe *found* him the ſubject of their private as well as public converſation, ſhe could not flatter herſelf that ſhe would relieve herſelf by the communication of whatever pain a ſeparation might coſt her, when ſhe could alone communicate it to the proved enemy of her peace. Beſides ſhe had a kind of ſuperſtitious confidence in the operations of Providence, nor could be perſuaded, that whatever changes or chances an individual experienced, when free from ſelf-reproach, were other than the divine will, and conſequently all calculated to anſwer a ſalutary purpoſe; therefore as the firſt interview of this *pair* of *lovers*, had been accidental, and the renewal

renewal of their *perſonal* approbation, an equal accident, as ſhe imagined, on both ſides, ſhe could not help truſting that all would turn out for the beſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

GENERAL Blakeney had the honour to be by ſome means a diſtant relation of Mrs. Arundel's, and Mrs. Arundel was a lady peculiarly tenacious of her family conſequence. No wonder, therefore, that the poor old gentleman's treatment, together with the fate of Minorca, ſhould become objects of their mutual attention.

The bravery of the governor, the hardſhips, the fatigues of a long and reſolute ſiege, were to the laſt degree enhanced in the recital, and the miſerable fatality by which both the one and the other were rendered abortive, ſpread out in its utmoſt aggravation. Though reduced to the greateſt extremities, yet relying upon the promiſes of adminiſtration, had not the general nobly diſdained capitulating, until the ſhips which contained all his hopes

hopes of ſuccour were ſeen, inſtead of making, to ſail beyond the port? Here was a ſomething of a baſis, nor did the induſtrious Vicar fail to raiſe an alarming ſtructure; the fleet under the command of Mr. Byng had not been unobſerved by him in all its ſlow preparations, and to the everlaſting fame of his prophetic genius, effected juſt as much when embarked as he had foretold.—The French ſquadron was permitted to paſs unattacked, at a time when an engagement would have been deciſive, and the garriſon at Minorca not only unrelieved, but compelled, by the mutiny of the ſoldiers from their diſappointments, to a diſadvantageous ſurrender.

Not a coffee-houſe in London was unviſited by Mr. Arundel on the occaſion; the flame of diſcontent raiſed to its utmoſt height, and the clamour againſt the adminiſtration ſuch as it was impoſſible to reſiſt; ſuch an officer aban-

doned—ſuch a loſs as Minorca incurred was ſufficiently irritating for the populace;—and whilſt they liſtened to the ſtory of the general's ſhort proviſions, his fortitude, his faith and his bravery, they reſolved to drag effigies of Mr. Byng through the ſtreets, and commit every act of phrenzy and outrage the abuſed *freedom* of the Engliſh conſtitution could alone ſuggeſt to the moſt frantic of mankind. Mr. Windham's popularity, as was the plan, increaſed with each ſucceeding day; the people looked up to him as their only preſerver; and ſo far did the exigencies of affairs prevail, that however repugnant to the inclination of the court party, he was a ſecond time invited to accept an appointment, that was to the laſt degree flattering to the Vicar's expectations.

This point gained, it was neceſſary that public opinion ſhould have ſome foundation; the Vicar, in an important

tete-

tete-a-tete, convinced his patron that nothing would be more grateful to the minds of the people, under their preſent circumſtances, (the foreign troops were ſent back a few days before his entering on his office) nor produce a greater oppoſition than an attempt to eſtabliſh a national militia.

The utility, the advantage, the neceſſity for ſuch an inſtitution, were now univerſally circulated by the Vicar and his train, and was received with the expected avidity. It was a ſervice of honour, of truſt; it was, in a word, to bring matters as it were to an equality they could never otherwiſe attain; it was leſſening the value of ſtanding armies, which had always been an object of diſguſt; it was to flatter, if not actually to promote the convenience and benefit of the individual. The activity, the aſſiduity, the parade of the new miniſter, communicated that hope to the breaſts of the

the people to which they had long been a ſtranger; for as there was buſineſs in agitation, they never ſuſpected, much leſs perceived, that the patriot was loſt. The topics of converſation were nevertheleſs ſo far changed at Mr. Windham's, that even Hanover, that *unimportant ſpot*, which no map whatever contained, was now diſtinguiſhed by the Vicar himſelf, by the epithet of his *majeſty's moſt reſpectable dominions*. The war, inſtead of being calculated for the ruin of England, was declared to be carrying on on the juſteſt of principles; it was not in order to extend, but preſerve our poſſeſſions; his majeſty was the common father of his ſubjects; and he begged to know whether in an hour of exigence we would not be glad to receive ſervices from *Hanover*, though we were unwilling that Hanover ſhould be ſerved at our expence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

MR. Windham, when he conſented to accept his uncle's choice, had confined all his attention to the fortune he was to receive upon the occaſion. The woman, according to the modern cuſtom amongſt men of faſhion and breeding, was a mere dead weight in the account, and he was pretty permanent in his ideas. The whole buſineſs, therefore, of his life (abſtracted from his political buſineſs) was diſſipation; but though he was indefatigable in his purſuits, from miſtaking the means, diſappointment was frequently his portion. He had not been taught that *joy* was the moſt capricious of all our attainments; that to reach the heart, it muſt be ſelf-derived, and that the form of laying traps did but effectually baniſh the *ſhade* that bid defiance to every ſpecies of conſtraint. Of all the misfortunes of exiſtence, none is more ſeverely felt

felt than this *rage* for amuſement; not the labour of a Siſyphus had ever leſs meaning, nor could be productive of leſs utility: this was, however, the misfortune Mr. Windham juſtly incurred as a puniſhment for counter-acting the good and rational principles with which nature had endued him; for it was not becauſe he was unſuſceptible of domeſtic ſatisfactions, that he had united himſelf to the woman he had little or no acquaintance with, and not the ſmalleſt diſpoſition to approve, but becauſe he choſe to ſacrifice every finer feelings to the ſuggeſtions of avarice.

But notwithſtanding Mr. Windham had objections to his wife's making an acquaintance with the Miſs Wentworths for many reaſons, Miſs Needham was introduced by him to her, as the woman he wiſhed ſhould ſhare her heart, and Mrs. Windham found great entertainment in the gaiety of that young lady's diſpoſition;

diſpoſition: nor did that young lady fail to find almoſt equal pleaſure at being ſo unexpectedly connected with Mr. Windham's family; more eſpecially at a period when her aunt was taken up with viſitors, that ſhe was wholly diſinclined to form any acquaintance with: nor was this by any means an unnatural circumſtance; for the beauty of the one ſiſter, and the wit of the other moſt mortifyingly exempted the reſt of the female world from attention, wherever they appeared; and as ſhe conceived that nothing but ſuch a rival could have proved an impediment to the advancement of her fortune, in her deſigns upon Lord Churchill, ſhe did not chuſe to expoſe herſelf even to the hazard of a ſecond *injury*. From theſe ſeveral particulars, Mrs. Windham's houſe became highly eligible to her; for it was, in the firſt place, a houſe of polite reſort, and in the ſecond, whatever ſuperior charms Mrs. Windham might have poſſeſſed, her

her being a married woman gave Miſs Needham every deſired advantage.

But however Miſs Needham's purpoſes were anſwered upon the occaſion, Mrs. Windham had little reaſon to congratulate herſelf on forming an acquaintance with her; for as the gaiety of her heart was unreſtrainable, ſo her artifice was unfathomable. Whatever folly or extravagance ſhe wiſhed to indulge herſelf in, ſhe moſt dextrouſly contrived to throw the blame upon her too indulgent friend; nor when Mr. Windham diſcovered any thing contrary to his approbation in his wife's conduct, could he, with all his penetration, trace it beyond her *immediate* want of diſcretion. It ſometimes indeed happened that Mrs. Windham was not quite ſatisfied with the ſcrapes ſhe found herſelf drawn into, and her heart even went ſo far as to ſuggeſt to her, that ſhe was duped by her pretended friend; but as her huſband was in better humour from

from the circumſtance of having a lively viſitor, and her *ſphere* of *activity* in no inconſiderable degree enlarged from that circumſtance, ſhe thought it was better to overlook an imaginary impoſition, than by complaining forfeit a real good.

Miſs Needham was ſo jeſuitical in all her proceedings, that ſhe might almoſt bid defiance to detection; nay her eagle-eyed uncle was unable, at all periods, to elude her wiles; therefore it muſt be far from extraordinary, that common minds were a prey to her. But ſo ſucceſsful as ſhe generally proved, it was a great check to her pride, and allay to her exultation, that Lord Churchill was beyond her utmoſt *reachings*: yet it was not by ſuperabundant caution, or ſuperabundant ſuſpicion, that he ſecured himſelf; it was by following the dictates of his *taſte*, and firmly avoiding all but general acquaintance with a woman utterly repugnant

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to that *taſte*, and repugnant, in many reſpects, to his moſt remote approbation.

Mrs. Arundel, not having a large ſtock of reputation herſelf, would frequently deſcend to put in her claim to *reflected* honours, from the idea ſhe entertained of her niece's reputation for every ſpecies of elegance with the *beau monde*—in this manner my niece Needham dreſſes—at ſuch and ſuch routs, my niece Needham is courted to appear—and few people that ever behold her, take her for any other than a perſon of the firſt rank. —How true it is that we cannot make a Mercury of every log!—had Mrs. Arundel but had the grace to have been ſilent, her rich cloaths, and rich connexions, could not have failed to give her dignity —ſhe would, nevertheleſs, betray the dunghill from which the gilded muſhroom had ſo recently ſprung, by betraying the poverty of ſoul that was her birthright

right, and the infallible characteriſtic of meanneſs and low-breeding.

Lord Churchill, whoſe heart was all benevolence, as he could not but perceive, wiſhed it had been poſſible to correct, the errors of her appearance; nay, he even proceeded ſo far, as to gently railly her upon her conformity to every new *whim*, and obſerved, that her good-ſenſe was rather impeached by ſuch apparent pliability: but Miſs Needham was one of thoſe people, that, according to Mr. Stern's account of the French, always pick out a flattering meaning from an ambiguous addreſs, and whatever ſatire, or inſtruction, it was intended to convey, placed it to an account, that wholly defeated the deſired effect. Beſides on ſuch occaſions his lordſhip ſeldom failed to inſinuate, that to dreſs like Miſs Sophia Wentworth, was to be the ſtandard of elegance, and the mark of incomparable underſtanding. Few with her

perſon, he would ſay, would heſitate a moment, to give into the utmoſt extravagances of faſhion, from conceiving that its utmoſt extravagance would be ſanctified by ſuch abundant lovelineſs: yet neatneſs and ſimplicity were her governing principles in that particular, nor were her manners leſs tainted by affectation than her figure peculiariſed by the trappings of folly.

This, and this alone, was the gall and bitterneſs ſhe could not avoid taſting; for it was death to her to be convinced that any female had the ſuperiority in the opinion of a man ſhe had thought it worth her while to form deſigns upon, and much more to find the acknowledged idea of ſuperiority to conſiſt in ſuch things as ſhe would have wiſhed to have turned into ridicule. When they did happen to be all of a party, Miſs Needham's volubility, by raiſing a laugh, ſeemed to give her the advantage, where the powers of entertainment,

entertainment, and an acquaintance with the great world, were the queſtion; but ſhe had the mortification to find, that that laugh once terminated, the ſweetneſs, and what ſhe called inſipidity of the pretty ruſtic, was ſufficient to bring back the gayeſt to their original aſſiduity and admiration. What abominable perverſeneſs! ſhe would exclaim, when ſeated at her toilet—theſe girls have not a ſingle charm to boaſt, beyond what I am poſſeſſed of, except *ſhyneſs* can come under that denomination—they neither throw out lures for the homage they meet with, nor betray the fainteſt gleam of gratitude on receiving it; nay more, I heard that eldeſt *thing* intreat to quit Ranelagh, only becauſe ſhe was made of too much importance by fellows the moſt deſirable of all others in a fine woman's train.—I cannot ſuſpect her of ſo much ingenuity as to be artful; or, from its being evident that the more ſhe flies, ſhe is ſo much the more purſued, I ſhould

think that the effect of management that I muſt otherwiſe conſider as the work of downright oppoſition, the offſpring of genuine contradiction. Had I been permitted to reach this fair one's ear, I would moſt aſſuredly have whiſpered ſome very ſalutary truths. It is the nature, the characteriſtic of humanity, to act repugnant to the wiſhes of the vain. That inſolence of aſpect, which beſpeaks, which demands, ſuperior attention, inſtead of being even *duely* honoured, never fails to excite diſguſt, whilſt the perhaps leſs beautiful features of modeſty and timidity are univerſally attractive. Vanity, under proper reſtrictions, (however ſtrange the aſſertion) is one of the firſt, becauſe one of the moſt active virtues. Everlaſting approbation and undying praiſe, are what it pants after, are what it aſpires to.—The vaineſt of individuals ought then to endeavour to be the moſt amiable of individuals—the graces of benevolence and the emanations of refine-

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ment are irreſiſtibly captivating, nor would it require half the labour to build our claims upon a firm foundation, that it coſts us only to weave the web of contempt, and incur all the chagrin that attends keen diſappointments—but this I confeſs is to forfeit my own character; reflections, ſuch as theſe, may fall with propriety from the pen of the moraliſt, the hiſtorian ought to employ his pen very differently.

Miſs Needham, however, miſtook the method for captivating; to diſplay a love of expence, and an eager purſuit of amuſements, was rather to make herſelf formidable than amiable: for however the gentlemen may admire the extravagance or thoughtleſsneſs of a caſual companion, there are few in their ſenſes that would willingly unite themſelves to ſuch known evils. In the courſe of her connexions ſhe had many lovers, but they all of them retreated

rather precipitately: attracted by the elegance of her appearance, they were repelled by the knowledge of her ſlender finances; and ſhe was moſt reluctantly convinced, that it was much harder to ſecure, than make a conqueſt.

But as people once ſtroled from the track of propriety are much more liable to flounder than recover themſelves, ſo pride and ſelf-opinion would not let her correct what ſhe too plainly ſaw was an error; whilſt the increaſed height of her head-dreſs, and abundant extenſion of petticoat, proclaimed her follies unrenounced, they only ſerved as beacons to the otherwiſe ſuſceptible heart at which they were levelled.

A regard for the fair daughters of the creation will lead me from my ſubject in ſpite of all my reſolutions; why will they ſo induſtriouſly labour to ſubſtitute deformity for graces, and wantonly oppoſe

poſe the kind intentions of nature? Lovely features appear to the beſt advantage when leaſt adorned, and ordinary ones only derive additional defects from gaudy trappings, not to mention the reproach the underſtanding muſt ſuſtain; elegance and good ſenſe are the ſtriking and irreſiſtible charms, and where elegance and good ſenſe are wanting, the deficiency cannot be ſupplied by the utmoſt torturings of art; but if the frippery of externals is ſo contemptible, what muſt we ſay to borrowed complexions, and the manifold *chicanery* practiced by the ladies to obtain admiration? ſhall we ſuppoſe the mind to be worthy when the cheek glows with *deceit?* or imagine, that ſhe who could go ſuch lengths for the gratifications of her vanity, would ſhudder at any thing that was properly calculated to fan that pernicious flame, though vice and infamy trod cloſe upon their heels?

CHAP. XII.

ALL this time the Miſs Wentworths were peculiarly happy in Lord Churchill's acquaintance, from his diſinclination for politics; for as politics were in no degree adapted to their caſt of ſentiment, and Mrs. Arundel's viſitors, not leſs than her huſband's, were all fond of public ſubjects and popular diſquiſitions; it was a relief, it was an entertainment to them, to chat with a creature formed upon their own plan, unbuſtling, yet benevolent, gentle, yet ſelf-minded, and well-bred, yet with the learning of a Tully, the wiſdom of a Socrates.

Miſs Sophia and my lord had contrived ſo well to underſtand one another, that he had ſolicited permiſſion, and ſhe more than half conſented, to his waiting upon Mrs. Wentworth.

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This part of his lordſhip's wiſhes, however, no ſooner reached Mr. Arundel's knowledge than he undertook to plead his cauſe with the good Mrs. Wentworth himſelf; for he recollected, it would be neceſſary his eloquence ſhould be exerted to ſettle the etiquette of allowing her child to marry a man, whom ſhe had been aſſured, at a former period, was capable no leſs than his lively couſin of entertaining diſhonourable deſigns upon her. Notwithſtanding Mr. Arundel had no extraordinary nicety himſelf, he was ſenſible what were the operations of the niceſt mind; and therefore knew it impoſſible for Mrs. Wentworth to admit of any excuſe for the baſe intention he had imputed to Lord Churchill; he nevertheleſs hit upon a ſhort and certain courſe; the earl's name was a ſecond time made free with; the intimation he had given her reſpecting the danger of the young gentleman's viſits to Miſs Wentworth was only a device of that

nobleman's to have him denied acceſs to her; the circumſtance told too well not to impoſe upon Mrs. Wentworth's credulity; and as Lord Churchill was now repreſented to her, as poſſeſſing every deſirable accompliſhment, ſhe could not ſuppreſs ſome little flutterings of vanity, on adding his title to the catalogue.

Miſs Louiſa aſked her ſiſter what ſteps were to be taken on the other ſide the queſtion; or whether paternal authority was not as ſacred as maternal: for my part, added ſhe livelily, I could not, in the moment that my heart felt how eſſential the coincidence of the latter to my happineſs, ſubſcribe to the *piety* of violating the former. Indeed Miſs Sophia, notwithſtanding her mother's ſanction, had great objections to yielding to her lover's ſolicitations of marrying him ſecretly; but ſuch was Lord Windham's diſpoſition, that there was not the ſmalleſt

ſmalleſt hopes of prevailing over his prejudices; and ſhe, at length, though very reluctantly, ſubmitted to the wiſdom of her friends, who appointed an early day in the ſucceeding week to confirm her Lady Churchill. The Vicar did not chuſe to appear in the affair for numberleſs reaſons, nor was his wife permitted on the ſame principle to attend her young friend: but Mrs. Wentworth had an old acquaintance only a few miles from London, whoſe ſon performed the office of father, and at whoſe houſe the company of that day were entertained; which conſiſted of Colonel Weſtly, a cornet in the ſame corps, juſt turned of ſeventeen, Miſs Louiſa Wentworth, and the bride and bridegroom. Mr. Leneſton was a youth of moſt pleaſing manners, and a happy perſon; Lord Churchill introduced him to his lady as his firſt favourite, aſſuring her, that nothing but an unfortunate miſunderſtanding between

that gentleman and the Vicar, ſhould have prevented his beſpeaking her friendſhip for him at a much earlier period.

Lady Churchill was ſufficiently inclined to judge highly of Mr. Leneſton's merits, from the peculiar regard with which her lord treated him; but ſhe confeſſed, that there was ſomething exceedingly prepoſſeſſing in his appearance, excluſive of every partial conſideration, and that ſhe was glad in the firſt injunction ſhe ever received, that her inclination and her duty were ſo perfectly correſpondent.

Louiſa raillied with her uſual good humour and innocence, and from a deſire to evince how much ſhe wiſhed to oblige her newly created brother, was attentive, beyond her common cuſtom, to the convenience and entertainment of the youth he loved.

Lord

Lord Windham was not long unapprized of his ſon's connexion with Miſs Wentworth; but as the Vicar, according to his preconcerted plan, repreſented it merely of ſuch a nature as to be diſſoluble at will, he very *morally* ſat down perfectly ſatisfied; and in order to give the better colour to this deception, that worthy prieſt prevailed upon Lord Churchill, though without acquainting him with his motive, to retire for ſome months to Mrs. Wentworth's rural habitation, promiſing to ſtand between him and his father's diſpleaſure, if after ſuch precautions his diſobedience ſhould tranſpire.

It has already been hinted, that Mr. Windham's domeſtic affairs were by no means under the happieſt regulation. His lady was a *fine* lady; dreſs and play according to *his* account of her dividing her heart. But dreſs and play were rather the methods of diſſipation ſhe had fixed upon, on finding how utterly unſuitable

ſuitable her diſpoſition to the diſpoſition of that man to whom ſhe was united, than objects of her choice. She was naturally generous and humane, diſpoſed to ſerve all mankind, or relieve their diſtreſſes; but was more particularly attentive to the tye of conſanguinity. Now it was a rule with Mr. Windham on all occaſions, to prefer a ſtranger to his neareſt relations; was a place unoccupied, an employment of conſequence within his gift, it was not a relation that was ever benefited: favours were loudeſt proclaimed by the unexpecting and unſoliciting; and the tale of gratitude much better told by a diſtant party; conſequently, it was the oſtentatious, rather than the ſeemingly ſelf-intereſted track he loved to purſue.

Mrs. Windham had, on her firſt marrying, pointed out many perſons to him, whom ſhe hoped would have ſhared his munificence; but after fruitleſs endeavours

deavours and repeated diſappointments, ſhe at length left him uninterruptedly to his own inventions.

But however Mrs. Windham might have the complaiſance or reſolution never to interfere in her huſband's concerns, he was very far from returning the compliment; it was no uncommon practice with him to break in purpoſely upon her moſt favourite parties; quarrel with her beſt approved friends, and, as a *coup de grace* in the art of contradiction, he conſtituted Mrs. Arundel the reigning miſtreſs of his family, and compelled his lady to regulate her principal ſteps, as ſhe pronounced moſt prudent, elegant or advantageous.

But this had nothing to do with his popular character, conſequently did not in the ſmalleſt degree diminiſh the luſtre of his fame; for your great men have an exemption from all private, in

return for their public virtues, nor is there one in a thouſand that fails to exerciſe ſo *extraordinary* a privilege.

Lord and Lady Churchill were attended in their country expedition by Miſs Louiſa and the agreeable Leneſton, with the merits of whoſe character and diſpoſition Miſs Louiſa felt herſelf unſpeakably charmed. But extravagant as the idea might ſeem in a girl of eighteen, ſhe had been frequently heard to declare that ſhe never would change her condition; her perſon ſhe inſiſted upon it, though tolerable in an acquaintance, would be intolerable in a wife, and ſhe moreover confeſſed her mind too independently conſtructed to acknowledge a ſovereign when it ſought only a friend.

Theſe declarations, together with her growing and viſible approbation of the young cornet, expoſed her to much raillery from her ſiſter and her lord; ſhe returned

returned the ball with equal kindneſs and good humour; aſſured them that Leneſton ſhould be the friend, though not the maſter of her heart, and that ſhe would prove for the honour of the ſex, that friendſhip and love, where the diſtinction was neceſſary, were not one and the ſame thing.

But however our conduct may be within our own power, where there are no claims nor no diſguſts upon a youthful heart, to be expoſed to frequent interviews with an agreeable object, is inſenſibly to rob it of a dangerous ſhare of approbation. In the country, people's pleaſures, from being more limited, are much more apt to center in their company, than in town. Lord and Lady Churchill had their domeſtic occupations to fill up many of their hours; and as to Mrs. Wentworth, ſhe ſeldom wanted employment. Leneſton and Louiſa were conſequently all the world to each other, for by much the

the larger portion of the twenty four hours—and from a ſimilarity of taſte, of ſentiment and diſpoſition, improved their mutual, their accidental importance to the utmoſt in their power. If Miſs Wentworth read, it was to communicate her comments on her author at their next meeting; or if Mr. Leneſton ſtrolled to any little diſtance from the lodge alone, it was for the purpoſe of diſcovering ſome new proſpect, to which he might conduct his fair friend on their next excurſion—thus, though ſeparate they were ever united, and without being aware of it, at leaſt on the lady's part, were laying the foundation for a no leſs ſoft than permanent attachment.

I own, I am obliged to do violence to my inclination whenever Miſs Louiſa Wentworth is the ſubject—becauſe I cannot help wiſhing it was poſſible to clear up the many errors, to which the otherwiſe moſt lovely part of the creation are expoſed, by holding them forth ſo ami-

amiable an example. It is by no means neceſſary that to be prudent we ſhould be gloomy, or to be lively, that we ſhould loſe ſight of diſcretion. Miſs Louiſa's wit was *pointed* by good nature, and her gaiety tempered by decorum; ſhe conſidered both ſexes with equal benevolence, and as ſhe was incapable of aiming at ſuperiority over the one, ſo ſhe was incapable of laying traps for the admiration of the other.—I ſhall, perhaps be told that with ſuch a perſon as I have deſcribed, it was wiſe in her not to prepare diſappointments for herſelf; but I muſt be allowed to obſerve, that her mind had as much the advantage of the generality of female minds, as the moſt perfect form had the advantage of whatever perſonalities ſhe could boaſt.—She nevertheleſs bore her faculties ſo meekly, that it was only by intimacy that her beſt graces were diſcovered; inſtead of which, we find many ladies making infinite parade of what at laſt proves only to be a ſuperficial knowledge of things,

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and a ſuperficial underſtanding; nor is it uncommon for your imaginary *wits*, to be full, if not more ſuperlatively *vain*, than the greateſt beauty in the univerſe.

They had not, however, enjoyed his company above three weeks before a ſummons from Colonel Weſtly called him to London, to prepare for a ſpeedy embarkation to the Weſt-Indies. Miſs Louiſa with difficulty ſuppreſſed the ſtarting tear—yet tenderneſs and affection are the teſts of friendſhip;—ſhe in vain laboured to render her laſt adieu articulate, nor could reſume her vivacity for many hours after his departure;—but when the ſoul is agitated, the accent cannot be compoſed;—when the ſoul is ſoftened by a thouſand ideas of danger and diſtreſs to an eſteemed object, why ſhould the natural operations be marvellous? or, if to feel for a brother would be no reproach to the pureſt mind, why theſe critical diſtinctions?

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—is not a valuable friend as precious as the neareſt relation?—Theſe were the reflexions, theſe the arguments, Louiſa Wentworth had recourſe to in order to recover her own good opinion; but as her brother and ſiſter were more than ever attentive to her amuſement, and ſpared her when furniſhed with ſuch inconteſtable weapons, ſhe could not conquer a delicate conſciouſneſs of ſome ſmall deviation from her character.

What, however, was the pang the lively Miſs Louiſa experienced, to that which Mrs. Weſtly's worthy boſom was deſtined to ſuſtain! A huſband, with whom ſhe had ſpent many years of happineſs, the happineſs of reaſon and of virtue, had been ſuddenly taken from her; and now the cruel, but inevitable neceſſity for giving up her only child, the ſupport, the comfort of her declining days, to all the hazardous conſequences of war, was a taſk that in the decline of life

life ſhe was bound to accompliſh: he had been engaged in the army before his father's death, and would have ſacrificed himſelf a thouſand ways rather than have incurred the ſlighteſt ſhadow of diſhonour; —what was then to be done?—Mrs. Weſtly having ſtrained him in her maternal arms, and invoked the heavens to ſhed their happieſt influence, retired with precipitance to her cloſet, from whence ſhe never returned until ſhe heard her child had performed his duty. Mrs. Weſtly and Mrs. Wentworth had been acquainted at an early period, conſequently their children's attachment had been early formed; and it would have been conſidered by the mothers as a pleaſing event, if more than the attachment of friendſhip had been the reſult. Louiſa was indeed intirely out of the queſtion, from her extreme youth; but though Sophia confeſſed the young ſoldier's abundant merit, though ſhe was the firſt to applaud his conduct, and the

firſt

firſt to tremble for his danger, her heart would never feel thoſe kind of ſentiments for him which ſhe conceived neceſſary to precede an everlaſting union; beſides, the profeſſion he was engaged in, and which was the profeſſion of his genius and election, was with her a very ſtrong objection. With reſpect to Mr. Weſtly, whilſt he ſubſcribed to all the merits of his fair friend, his tendres were devoted to a lady, whoſe charms, however inferior to Sophia's, pleaſed his fancy and attracted his approbation in a different degree, to all he felt for her. This little diſappointment of the maternal wiſh was only compenſated by the unexceptionableneſs of the man to whom Miſs Wentworth was united, and of the woman the blooming general hoped to call his own.

Having torn himſelf therefore from the houſe of his mother, accompanied by Mr. Leneſton, he flew to this beloved lady,

lady, with whom he was on the very eve of marriage, when the commands of his ſoverign and the diſtreſſes of his country required him to embark upon a dangerous expedition.

The ſenſibility of the lover was heightened by the ſenſibility of the hero; none but the brave, according to his creed, meriting the fair.—I go, my dear madam, ſaid he, either to render myſelf more worthy of the diſtinction with which you have honoured me; or to ſanctify that diſtinction by falling in a noble cauſe.—Heaven will perhaps be propitious!—but whatever diſpoſition Heaven is pleaſed to make of the man who aſpired to your hand, it muſt not be obtained by a breach of his duty.

Poor Leneſton was exceedingly affected at the interview, and gave one almoſt involuntary ſigh to the recollection of the amiable Miſs Wentworth. Mrs. Weſtly retired

retired, but the tender-hearted Louiſa begged leave to accompany her, in order to ſoften the meaſure of her afflictions; of which offer ſhe moſt gladly accepted, for Louiſa was her god-daughter and very great favourite.

CHAP. XIII.

THE ſcheme of the national militia had ſo much of the guiſe of true patriotiſm, that though many might wiſh, few ventured to oppoſe it. It was a ſalutary, it was a ſpirited meaſure, and produced all thoſe happy conſequences the Vicar had intended it ſhould be productive of—the fixing his patron in the affections of the people. The troops that had given ſuch diſguſt to the Engliſh, were removed, indeed, from their ſight, but retained in their pay: a little army of obſervation were formed by them in Weſtphalia, and his royal highneſs the duke of Cumberland was appointed their commander—ſupplies were ſolicited and obtained by his majeſty for their ſupport; but, notwithſtanding Mr. Windham did not heſitate to deliver his majeſty's meſſage reſpecting this grant to the houſe, and appeared highly pleaſed with

with its ſucceſs, ſome certain circumſtances tranſpired, that proved his heart was not well affected towards it; in conſequence of which, he received an intimation to reſign, to the utter chagrin of the Vicar.

Mr. Windham ſuſtained this diſgrace with the dignity of conſcious virtue; was never once heard to complain againſt, or, in the ſmalleſt degree, reflect upon the authors of it. But however exemplary his moderation, the Vicar's vehemence hurried him into the oppoſite extreme;—he recapitulated, whereever he came, the wonders of Mr. Windham's adminiſtration; what great things he had done, and what greater ſtill had been prepared by him for accompliſhment, had not his enemies prevailed againſt him, and the ear of his ſovereign been ſo unhappily tainted.

In this ſhort receſs from employment, the Vicar propoſed to his patron to make a viſit to Lord Churchill, in which propoſal that gentleman moſt willingly acquieſced; and, accompanied by Mrs. Arundel, they arrived ſafely at Wentworth lodge, as Lord Churchill had named his mother-in-law's ſmall, but elegant habitation.

Lord Churchill was not of that number, whoſe behaviour is regulated by the ſmiles or frowns of court favour. Convinced his couſin had been ill treated, becauſe he told him he had, he made it his whole ſtudy to ſoften his private diſſatifactions, by his kindeſt approbation.

As that ſerenity of ſky which ſucceeds a thunder ſtorm is moſt pleaſingly enjoyed by moſt individuals, ſo the fatigues and buſtles of a court life gave Lord Churchill's retreat additional beauties to the

the mind of its viſitants. The fields appeared more lovely, the ſtreams more refreſhing, the general ſimplicity more amiable, and the gentle goddeſs of the ſcene, the ſweet Sophia, more divine, from the amazing contraſt to all they had been accuſtomed to behold. Sophia, unconſcious of the advantages, the enchanting light in which ſhe was conſidered, with each returning day diſplayed ſome new powers for entertaining;—little concerts were formed by her, like the firſt mother of mankind; with chearful innocence ſhe led the ruſtic ball; but, however amiable her conduct, neither Mr. Windham, nor the Vicar, were perfectly ſatisfied with it.

Mr. Windham's perſon was allowed to be a very fine one, by the whole polite circle; Mr. Arundel's underſtanding of an uncommon magnitude; and they conceived themſelves intitled to very different diſtinctions to thoſe the lady was

diſpoſed to pay them :—her huſband was the firſt and laſt object of her ſolicitude and ſatisfaction, and ſhe was weak enough to be flattered by the reputation of an excellent wife, which ſhe poſſeſſed all over the country.

The Vicar was more than ever offended, by her ladyſhip's confirmed inſenſibility. A girl might be incapable of diſcovering his mental perfections; a girl might be diſguſted by the gravity of the eccleſiaſtical character, but the girliſh period was paſt; yet did he find himſelf only honoured and reſpected, where he cruelly and unwarrantably ſought to obtain ſome more tender conſideration, and he entered into freſh vows of dire vengeance.

Sometimes he thought it would be no bad ſcheme to betray the miſerable Louiſa, as he very obligingly called her; but that was ſoon rejected, as wholly incompatible

patible with her character; and as he was unable to fix upon any thing with the ſmalleſt probability, he reſolved to leave it to opportunity, not only to furniſh him with means, but to give thoſe means the colour he moſt wiſhed them to wear. According to his creed, opportunity was the grand eſſential; and he was ſo hardy, as one day to aſk a perſon he was converſing with, as the teſt of his arguments, whether, under proper management, avarice could not receive the complexion of prudence, deceit of caution, ſelf-intereſt of public ſpiritedneſs, and revenge of juſtice.

Lord Churchill, whoſe love of the Engliſh conſtitution, and zeal for the eſtabliſhed religion, occaſioned him to be attached, as I have already obſerved, to the prince then upon the throne, was exceedingly pleaſed to find his viſitors ſentiments correſpondent; for when in town, he had too little attended to politics to know

which party they belonged to:—his own ſincerity ſecured him from all ſuſpicion, and the change in their ſentiments was conſidered by him as merely the effects of conviction and ingenuouſneſs.

Was the houſe of commons, he would ſay, but better furniſhed with the diſintereſted, the rational, the diſtinguiſhing and the juſt, what a happy, what a proſperous nation would the Engliſh be rendered?—No country, he would add, poſſeſſed ſimilar advantages—there only wanted a judicious head and a reſolute hand;—the people were ſuſceptible of whatever impreſſions thoſe in power were diſpoſed to give them;——the people were blameleſs, let their errors be ever ſo great—the deceiving wiſe, not the credulous ignorant, the proper objects of contempt and diſapprobation.

During all this time the Vicar was not idle; his adherents, his creatures, regularly

larly received and as regularly fulfilled his injunctions. The popularity of his friend was ſwelled to an aſtoniſhing height, and gold boxes, with the freedom of the firſt cities, courted his acceptance in his hour of ſuppoſed injury, in the hour of his ſuppoſed inactivity. But notwithſtanding the Vicar's attendance upon his friend, his deſigns upon the innocent Clara were by no means renounced or defeated: a dangerous illneſs had made it impoſſible for Lord Windham to think of moving her for ſome months, and Mr. Arundel conceived, that the leaſt aſſiduity he ſhewed upon the occaſion, the leaſt ſuſpicion he ſhould incur. The miniſtry which ſucceeded Mr. Windham, were not poſſeſſed of ſuch ſhining abilities as to compenſate, in the eyes of the public, for what they had loſt. The ſquadron which had been detached by their favourite to the Eaſt-Indies, and another to Jamaica, were now deſpaired of effecting what he had

planned. The Vicar cauſed it every where to be bruited that Mr. Windham had prepared an American ſupply, which would have been ſpeedily remitted, if he had not been jockied out of his employment; nor did the merit of his obtaining the royal aſſent to the militia-bill, during his ſhort adminiſtration, paſs uncelebrated.

By the Vicar's addreſs alſo was the navy brought at this juncture into the higheſt reputation.—It was not compoſed, he would obſerve, as heretofore, of the low and uninformed, but of men of incorruptible and enterpriſing ſpirits—liberal fortunes and liberal educations—inured to dangers, difficulties and hardſhips, and undebauched by the foppery, the coxcombry, which ſo glaringly diſtinguiſhed the military tribe. No luxurious tents, no magnificent pavilions were the objects of their wiſhes or eſtimation The Roman genius, however degenerated in

in every other breaſt, lived ſtrong in theirs; and as they were beſt calculated, ſo, if his friend had held the reins, they ſhould have been moſt eminently employed in the ſervice of their country.—All which ſentiments were as eagerly imbibed as induſtriouſly propagated.

The king of Pruſſia now became the hero of the age.—His perſeverance, his ſucceſs againſt the Auſtrians, was too ſtriking a contraſt to the ſupineneſs of the Britiſh military, not to occaſion great diſſatisfaction in the political world. All was lawful game that the Vicar was capable of reaching, and provided he had an engine to play off, no matter whether it was borrowed from the Pruſſians or the French. Succeſſive changes were every where rung upon the abilities, the valour of the Pruſſian monarch, and the Vicar ſecretly procured medals to be ſtruck of this temporary deity. The bait was not to be reſiſted; an alliance with the king

of Pruſſia was the general voice.—It was the king of Pruſſia alone that could tame the haughty power of France, preſerve us from domeſtic invaſion, and ſave our American poſſeſſions from devaſtation. The Culloden hero, ſuch is the caprice of human favour, was now little thought of, though in a moſt critical ſituation, though daily ſoliciting, and daily expecting the neceſſary ſupplies; though a voluntary exile for the defence of the country he loved, and though far beyond every poſſibility of enjoying the accommodation his birth and fortune intitled him to.—While the Pruſſian king's praiſes every where reſounded, this hero of the year forty-ſix, who was reduced to the neceſſity of retreating as the enemy advanced, inſtead of ſtriking a deciſive blow, was wholly unaſſiſted and wholly diſregarded.

Mr. Windham exulted in his retreat; the American undertakings were all un-

unproſperous, the arrival of every fleet on every foreign deſtination untimely; and it was univerſally believed that theſe misfortunes would have been averted, if his power of action had remained.

Never did the face of things appear ſo formidable in Britain as at this conjuncture.—His majeſty's diſtreſs was, beyond meaſure, complicated; bleeding for the miſeries to which the kingdom of his nativity was expoſed, and for the dangers which threatened the kingdom of his ſucceſſion, he knew not what courſe to take.—Mr. Windham's underſtanding was an acquiſition he would have rejoiced in, but he diſliked his principles, and had detected him in ſome ſmall diſingenuities. His majeſty was, however, too ſenſible to be obſtinate, and too generous to ſacrifice the public good to private pique, or private inclination; he deſired to conciliate the affections of his people; their happineſs was dearer to him than his own—he contemned

temned all favouritiſm, but ſuch as was founded on real worth, and from unexampled condeſcenſion conceived the general opinion might more ſafely be truſted than his own. Mr. Windham was therefore a third time invited to a participation in government, and the glad Vicar attended to increaſe the triumph and partake the gale.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

LORD Windham had too much cordiality for *good-natured* Ladies (and his Lordſhip had too juſt an opinion of Mrs. Arundel not to give her the utmoſt credit in that particular) to be ſurpriſed or offended at the long viſit his friends and relations had made to his ſon's favourite. After the former he therefore enquired with the affection of a father, after the latter with the gallantry of a man of faſhion, who knew life, and thought himſelf infinitely happy in ſuch an agent as Arundel, both in his own amours and thoſe of his family; for he looked upon the reconciling Lord Churchill to a *ſenſible* attachment, as a maſter ſtroke, from his poſſeſſing thoſe principles of generoſity and romance which muſt otherwiſe have expoſed him to the greateſt follies. As every thing was now completed for the re-

reception, and the accounts of Miſs Clara Sidney's health not only favourable but perfectly ſatisfactory, the Earl begged Mr. Arundel would make her one more viſit, and give her ſuch impreſſions of his intentions as ſhould induce her unreluctantly to exchange her preſent ſituation for any one he ſhould chuſe to propoſe to her. The viſit was accordingly made, and the Lady's mind moſt artfully attacked, though not in the cauſe of right honourable *iniquity*. Mr. Arundel affected the deepeſt concern, and treated the unſuſpecting girl with a reſerve, yet with a tenderneſs ſhe had never before obſerved in his behaviour. Having for ſome time watched the changes in his countenance, and revolved his extraordinary expreſſions, ſhe took the alarm.—My good Sir, cried ſhe, with the moſt engaging earneſtneſs, what have you to communicate, that you are afraid I ſhould hear? Have I loſt my benefactor?—You ſhake your head

head—It muſt be ſo; but have I not loſt a father long ago, to teach me ſubmiſſion to the will of Heaven?

For your ſake, madam, returned the Vicar, notwithſtanding my intereſt is ſo materially connected with that nobleman, and notwithſtanding all the ſervice he has rendered me, for your ſake, I repeat, I could wiſh you were right in your conjectures;—but that the Earl of Windham lives is Miſs Sidney's greateſt misfortune, for he lives.—

Your friendſhip for me, Sir, ſaid Miſs Sidney, with the mild grace of pious reſignation, occaſions you to ſuffer without a cauſe.—Lord Windham has then withdrawn his protection; Lord Windham will no longer decorate the laſt remains of a poor old man with undue trappings; but let them go—I can thank him for the paſt, and unrepiningly ſubmit to the future. I own it is a

mis-

misfortune that I have been ſo elegantly bred. To unlearn, however, Mr. Arundel, cannot be a harder taſk than to learn; and if you can condeſcend to favour me with ſome little countenance, all ſhall yet be well with me.

How could it be poſſible, exclaimed the Vicar, with up-lifted eyes, for the greateſt villian in exiſtence to betray ſuch an angel! and yet there is but one ſituation that can preſerve that lovely perſon, that moſt amiable mind from inconveniencies; was I but ſome years younger, how ſhould I exult in being able to offer you a legal protector! but the diſparity of my years, the ſerious turn of my temper, and the gravity of that function to which I belong, can give no eligible impreſſions of me to the blooming boſom—yet, my Lord's baſe deſigns—

Spare me, cried Miſs Sidney, covering her face with her hands, O! Sir, I beſeech you, ſpare me the confuſion, the diſtreſs, the

the horror of that thought—and yet, recovering herſelf a little, tell me all—it is the guilty alone that ought to feel confuſion: the purity of my own heart, and the purity of my own intentions, ſhall ſupport me under the ſhocking information.

I came, then, my dear Miſs Sidney, returned the *honeſt* Vicar, by his Lordſhip's peculiar command, to prepare you for what he is ſo abandoned as to call a life of affluence; but I am ſatisfied you will concur with me, that ſplendid infamy is only infamy ſo much the more conſpicuous. Allow me, therefore, to add that I come with a full determination to offer you my hand, if you can condeſcend to accept it, my everlaſting faith, my legal protection; this, and this only will be your ſecurity from innumerable deſigns of the ſame dreadfully ungenerous nature; for ſuch is the diſpoſition, the education, the principles

ciples of mankind, that the eminently lovely are ever marked down for their prey.

Miſs Sidney, notwithſtanding all her compoſure and firmneſs, could not ſuppreſs abundance of fears, from the idea of ſo much baſeneſs in the man ſhe had honoured, and the idea of the indignity ſhe had ſuſtained. The Vicar ſoothed her with all that could charm the imagination of refinement, made profeſſions that would have fell not ungracefully from the lips of a divinity, and at length obtained a ſweet confeſſion from the moſt perfect of human hearts, that a whole life of the tendereſt attention would be deemed an inadequate return for ſuch great obligations.

This grand point gained, the Vicar inſtructed her in ſome methods of deception ſhe herſelf could never have ſtruck out, for the purpoſe of effectually defeating

defeating every endeavour of Lord Windham's to diſcover the place of her retreat.—He thought it moſt adviſable for her to give the family ſhe belonged to reaſon to apprehend ſhe was forcibly carried off; promiſed to have a houſe ready for her reception, and provide a carriage and ſervants, in ſuch a manner as to favour that wiſh, yet guard againſt every poſſibility of a purſuit. Then, taking his leave, left her to meditate on what had paſſed.

When arrived at Lord Windham's, he made ſuch a report as he knew was beſt calculated to amuſe that nobleman, when Lord Windham ventured to acknowledge to him, that he had long reſolved to confer the dignity of counteſs upon the accompliſhed Miſs Sidney.

Mr. Arundel was petrified at the ſound.— However, there was ſtill the ſame cauſe for exultation; it was impoſſible for any one to undeceive the lady

lady, or interrupt his ſchemes; for, as no ſuſpicion of him had ever been formed, he was certain to receive the firſt intimation of every enſuing ſtep reſpecting her. He now debated with himſelf where he ſhould convey her:—in a remote corner of the country, ſhe might perhaps be leſs liable to diſcovery; but then ſhe would be beyond the reach of his viſits: and indeed, ſuch were the accidents of life, that ſome demon, the more precaution was uſed, might be the more induſtrious to reveal. He therefore determined to run into the danger to avoid the apprehenſion, and at leaſt receive the price of diſappointment and detection, if ſuch were to be his fate. He had great reaſon to believe that Stepney was a town of all others the moſt ſecure from Lord Windham's knowledge. A ſmall, but very convenient habitation was ſoon there obtained by him, and a couple of decent ſervants put into poſſeſſion; and having acquainted Miſs

Sidney

Sidney when to expect the carriage, he found himſelf very impatient for the ſafe execution of his plan.

His apprehenſions were all without foundation; the train of his meaſures were too well laid to fail of ſucceſs. Miſs Sidney, in the cauſe of virtue, in the cauſe of integrity, was an abſolute heroine, and the Vicar, to convince her of his honour and his love, produced a licence (of his own drawing) immediately upon her arrival, and preſented her one of his very beſt friends, as a man qualified to perform the ſacred ceremony. The ceremony was accordingly performed, and the wretched Miſs Sidney irreparably undone. It occurred to the Vicar that it would be beſt to appriſe the earl at the earlieſt moment he could be ſuppoſed to have received intelligence of his loſs, and flatter him with the hope of her being recovered; at the ſame time that he conceived it neceſſary to diſpatch

ſuch a letter to the good people under whoſe care Miſs Sidney had been ſituated, as ſhould ſilence their enquiries, and remove their anxiety, without giving them the ſmalleſt information.

Lord Windham ſunk under the news; his vanity or his love was too deeply wounded for him to ſupport it; the agitation of his ſpirits ſoon brought on a violent attack of the gout, and his phyſicians declared him in the greateſt danger. During a whole ſix weeks confinement, the Earl was ſo whimſical and petulant that he would not ſuffer the mention of a ſingle affair to be made to him. Miſs Sidney, the obtaining Miſs Sidney, was the beginning and ending of all his wiſhes. The Vicar once preſumed to aſk him if he would not ſee Lord Churchill? He threw himſelf into a rage, and told him, ſuch ſolemnities were only fit for dying men, and begged he might not be terrified.—In ſhort, what-

whatever ſtruck his imagination as gloomy, was rejected by him as his greateſt evil, nor would he confeſs the moſt diſtant notion of death, untill his laſt breath was eſcaping him.

Thus fell the Earl of Windham, a victim to gallantry, after all the devaſtations he had committed; for had the Vicar underſtood his honourable intentions in due time, he durſt not have proved an impediment to them, though there is little reaſon to believe that Miſs Sidney could have yielded to his propoſals, unleſs betrayed by a too nice ſenſe of gratitude for a benefactor.

The Earl and Counteſs of Windham did not quit their beloved retirement, on the deceaſe of their father, as no accounts reached them untill he was no more. They intreated Mr. and Mrs. Arundel would give them their company once again in the country; for,

from conſidering Mr. Arundel as the author of their felicity, they could with pleaſure have laid kingdoms at his feet. But Mr. and Mrs. Arundel were in no degree diſpoſed to accept their invitations, from having experienced how ill they were calculated to participate the rational ſatisfactions of that paradiſaical ſpot. The natural turn of Lord Windham's diſpoſition, together with the gentleneſs and humility of his wife's ſentiments, had indeed conſtituted him a moſt extraordinary creature. The falſe lights and ſhades by which the *great* world are abuſed had with him no exiſtence.—In the plainneſs of ſimplicity, and the purity of veracity, he beheld both cauſes and effects, and though his ſenſibility would not ſuffer him to degenerate into a miſanthropiſt, he was in every degree what the undiſtinguiſhing call a humouriſt;—his dreſs was not regulated by faſhion, but by convenience; his meals by the hours of the day, but the

the demands of appetite, and his actions by reaſon, juſtice, and humanity; their life was conſequently a life of pleaſantneſs, and their boſoms ever more at peace.

CHAP. XV.

THE Vicar had no great difficulty, as Miſs Sidney had no connexions, nor any curioſity for reading the public papers, to conceal the knowledge of Lord Windham's death, which, in his critical ſituation, was of the higheſt importance; for as Miſs Sidney apprehended that Lord Windham was the only enemy ſhe had in the world, and the only cauſe of her preſent obſcurity, ſhe would neceſſarily have expected to have been very differently accommodated, when all obſtacles were removed.

Nothing was ever more exemplary than this unhappy young Lady's conduct in her deceived ſtate; not a moment of her life but was devoted to the ſtudy of adding new charms either to her mind or perſon, for the ſake of that man, whoſe happineſs ſhe held moſt ſacred: nay ſuch

ſuch is the force of virtue, that the Vicar's infernal ſoul frequently ſhrunk before it; when he beheld her all lovely and ſpotleſs as to every intentional crime, he could have wiſhed that the crime of ſeduction had been his with fewer aggravations; but the buſtles of politics on the one hand, and a natural propenſity to guilt on the other, ſoon ſilenced all his compunctions.

The new arrangement of the miniſtry gave hope once more to the breaſts of all kinds of people; for in appearance, by that new arrangement, the moſt jarring elements were reconciled for the public good, and though the eminence of power was evidently Mr. Windham's, his unaſſuming demeanour, the uncommon moderation of his conduct gave additional force to his other merits in the hearts of the populace. And here I cannot forbear obſerving, that happy would it have been for England, if this

had not been the almoſt only inſtance of a popular or royal favourite's bearing his conſequence meekly, or of a ſovereign's nobly diſdaining to bring *ſelf* into competition with the proſperity of his kingdom. But this favourite knew well the human conſtruction, and never neglected the ſubſtance for the ſhadow; and this moſt gracious and ever to be revered ſovereign had too juſt a ſenſe of thoſe beſt reins of government, the *affections* of the people, to ſuffer any act of his own to wreſt them from his hands.

Mr. Windham fell to work with his wonted activity;—but there was ſo much to undo before any thing could be done, that nothing leſs than the indefatigable ſpirit with which he was endued, could have ſupported him in it. France was to the laſt degree victorious; Embden had been ſeized by one part of her army, and the other, having united ſeveral

veral detachments, gave chace to that ill-treated Prince the Duke of Cumberland, who paſſed the Weſer for the ſecurity of his handful of men, and defeated him at Haſtenbec;—when finding the electorate wholly untenable, and himſelf deſerted by his father's miniſtry, as there was no other meaſures to prevent the remaining few from becoming priſoners, he ſigned a convention of neutrality, diſtributed his troops into cantonments, and, with proper indignation, returned to England.

The Vicar and his patron, though ſo vigouroufly puſhing their fame and intereſt under the elector of Hanover's auſpices, had, in no degree, forgot their original diſaffection; the ſovereign was, indeed, too ſecure for their attacks, but the ſon, the brave, the once idolized ſon was now at their mercy, and though avarice and ambition were powerful ſprings in his breaſt, malignance, re-

venge, and a natural paſſion for perſecuting the meritorious if unfortunate, were ſuperior to both.

The convention was held forth in its moſt aggravated features to the deluded populace;— the court, the miniſtry, affected to diſapprove what their neglect had rendered inevitable, and the ſame illuſtrious Prince, who, in the year forty-ſix, was hailed the ſaviour of Britain, was received with inſults and indignities on his arrival from a ſtation where he had experienced injuſtice, diſhonour, danger and mortification.—Yes, to the everlaſting reproach of the Engliſh, that very populace, who, with the loudeſt acclamations, had hung on his chariot wheels, and from grateful zeal had impeded his horſes in their paſſage, now ſtrove to excell each other in acts of outrage and inſolence.— Fatigued in body, and diſſatisfied in mind, dead cats and mud were thrown into his chaiſe

chaiſe as he paſſed through White-Chapel, in which worthy ſcene, and ſtill more worthy tranſactions, the reverend Vicar had no inconſiderable ſhare.—He was refuſed all acceſs to the throne, refuſed every opportunity of explaining, much leſs of vindicating his conduct, and unable to bear unprovoked paternal, and unmerited national diſpleaſure, unmoved, he took the military ſignature from his hat, and putting it into the hands of one of his faithful followers, bid him tell his father he was no longer a ſoldier, and retired to his palace at Windſor.

The Vicar was too deep read, as has already been obſerved, in the myſtery of politics, not to underſtand their fluctuating and inconſiſtent nature.—The ſun that declined to-day, was frequently only bidding the fairer to riſe to-morrow with encreaſed luſtre. He therefore whiſpered in his patron's ear, that a viſit to the diſ-

graced, the injured favourite, would recommend him to all parties. Beſides all this, there was a wheel within a wheel, that the public were but little appriſed of, and which, from a reſpect for the *free-maſonry* of politics, I ſhall forbear revealing.— The viſit was accordingly made, and a friendly intercourſe eſtabliſhed, much to the ſatisfaction of every perſon who was capable of peeping behind the political curtain; and though the populace were for a long time deceived, I need not inform my readers what reputation that Prince enjoyed with that very populace, at the unfortunate period of his deceaſe.

Sir Edward Hawke was now preparing for his embarkation with the troops under his convoy on a moſt promiſing expedition, and Mrs. Arundel, though it may appear a much leſs important event, was at the ſame time preparing, in conſequence of a moſt kind invitation, from

from her declining health, for the South of France. The fleet did embark, and Mrs. Arundel made her excurſion.—The little iſle of Aix was taken; but when the troops expected to be immediately put into action againſt Rochefort, a boat or two was ſent out, and that for no other apparent purpoſe than the being recalled.—The enemy was alarmed, but not in the ſmalleſt degree annoyed, and after ſeverl little divertiſements, the whole naval and military force returned home for farther orders.

The country was, by theſe ſtrange proceedings and former diſappointments, thrown into an univerſal ferment; the commanders, both naval and military, exclaimed againſt with the utmoſt virulence, and juſtice demanded, in peremptory terms, upon the delinquents. The officers, in order to exculpate themſelves, threw the blame upon the miniſtry, and the miniſtry, by way of

amuſing the incenſed people, appointed that an enquiry ſhould be made into the merits of the charge.—The enquirers gave it in favour of adminiſtration, and the military commander was branded with diſobedience. A court-martial was, however, granted him, where, on the particular evidence of Sir Edward Hawke, he was acquitted, notwithſtanding which the public favour was unrecovered by him; and what was very remarkable, the Vicar was the leaſt buſy on this miſcarriage of any the nation had ever experienced.

The Vicar's inactivity was, nevertheleſs, but of ſhort continuance; he found it neceſſary to exert his eloquence in his patron's defence, and evince, which he very ſoon did, that unleſs he acted ſolely, he could never become anſwerable for all the tranſactions of adminiſtration; that he had numberleſs enemies, only for having been the friend of his coun-

try,

try, and that it muſt be needleſs to obſerve that malignant ſpirits were irreſtrainable, and would heſitate at nothing to gain their point; that rather than not tear him from the hearts of the populace, they would involve the whole kingdom in deſtruction, provided they could, in the ſmalleſt degree, mark him down for the author.

The multitude, as uſual, heard, believed, and were convinced; Mr. Winddam was again their idol, and once more enabled to abuſe their confidence.

Mrs. Arundel at length alarmed by the ill ſucceſſes of her niece, and ſtill more alarmed at the growing expence in her accommodation, fixed her eye upon Miſs Louiſa's rational admirer, as a good dupe, if properly managed; accordingly it was ſettled, that as ſoon as ſhe returned from the country, Miſs Needham ſhould affect indiſpoſition—

abſent

abſent herſelf wholly from the great world, and affect a wonderful taſte for domeſticality.

Miſs Needham had many objections to the ſcheme—the ſiege might be a tedious one, and how could ſhe exiſt at a diſtance from the vitals of her exiſtence? Should any diſappointment intervene, would not her artifice tranſpire, and could ſhe ever ſhew her face again where ſhe delighted ſo much to be ſeen? but it was her dernier reſort—and ſhe was compelled to make a virtue of neceſſity. A certain duke however found her ſo encouraging, that he ventured to enter very ſpiritedly into her train; and it was whiſpered—hiſtorians have nothing to do with whiſpers, facts only can be regiſtered in their annals.

His grace was both a huſband and a father; but he was too faſhionable not to deſpiſe the firſt character, and too well

well bred to do honour to the laſt—his wife and children were the only perſons in the world that could complain of his want of tenderneſs or attention: nor, though theſe were circumſtances pretty notorious, was he by any means the worſe received by women of the niceſt refinement, or moſt eminent reputation.

Yet notwithſtanding this very cuſtomary, this very improper conduct, the ladies would be highly offended, if their delicacy, or their honour, was to be called in queſtion, but upon the moſt flagrant proofs. You are not in this very polite age to truſt the evidences of your own ſenſes—you muſt take up your opinion upon the credit of others, and not once believe, that where a lady has not the reſolution to avoid the flattery, ſhe cannot have any very moral objections to the man. The duke was however ſo well pleaſed with Miſs Needham's behaviour, that he preſented her ſome

ſome very magnificent tokens of his gratitude—a diamond roſe ſtomacher, and many other articles, which ſhe would otherwiſe never have been miſtreſs of; and it was ſo much to her aunt's ſatisfaction, that ſhe applauded his grace's generoſity no leſs than her niece's wiſdom, and ſet it down as a clear point, that if he had been free from prior claims upon his title, that, together with his perſon, would have been beſtowed where his heart was ſo apparently devoted. There is no ſuch thing as contradicting theſe ſtrange fancies, unleſs it was poſſible to remove every ſuppoſed obſtacle, or was even that the caſe, might it not be aſſerted that he had changed his mind by delays? and that though he would have married her on his firſt acquaintance, the novelty ceaſing, and his recollection returning, he thought proper to act a contrary part.

The ſnare had been laid for Mr. Davenport ſo ſucceſsfully, that he even rejoiced that he had been refuſed by Louiſa, for to all the beauties of her diſpoſition, in this inſtance, was ſuperadded a very engaging perſon, and the moſt heavenly ſweetneſs of diſpoſition. The wedding preparations were carried on with infinite ſpirit;—an equipage, a houſe in the moſt polite ſtile was provided for her accommodation, and Mr. Windham deigned to ſmile with uncommon graciouſneſs upon the object of her choice. Poor Mr. Davenport, how miſerably was he impoſed upon! the heart he was ſeeking to engage, by numberleſs acts of generoſity, knew only to deſpiſe him, and to laugh at every worthy, every noble principle: from the moment he was hook'd in, to the moment of his nuptials, was one continued ſcene of deception and fraudulent practices; nor was he ſuffered to have connection with a ſingle creature that could have

have betrayed their real character to him. The appointed day at laſt arrived,—to church went the Vicar, his patron, and his wife, to be witneſſes to the accompliſhment of their fine work, and the Lady returned Mrs. Davenport.

Having received and repaid her round of viſits, her huſband gently intimated his deſire to quit town; but ſhe peremptorily inſiſted upon it, that thoſe only who had an objection to continue in it, ſhould leave it; and that, as ſhe did not wiſh to put a reſtraint upon his inclinations, ſhe did hope ſhe had nothing of the kind to apprehend from him. He now, for the firſt time, began to perceive his error, but conſcious that it was too late to retrieve it, he ſtill perſiſted to ſoothe her into compliance; but all he was able to obtain was a kind of compromiſe, that if ſhe was indulged the preſent winter, he ſhould be conſulted.

ed the next. It is very natural to ſuppoſe that a man endued with every ſocial, every rational propenſity, could not but be exceedingly wretched with a woman of ſo oppoſite a turn of ſentiments. The Vicar and Mr. Windham would endeavour to keep him in good humour in the abſence of his Lady, but neither abſence or preſence afforded the expected felicity. Her party was, indeed, ſtrong againſt him; he was a Hottentot with the belles, and a Barbarian with the beaux; nor did ſhe ſcruple to pick a ſubject for ridicule out of him whereever ſhe went. A woman of ſpirit is a moſt *amiable* creature! to deſtroy thoſe they are bound to ſave, to impair the fortune to which they have not contributed a ſhilling, and plant thorns about the pillow of him whoſe repoſe they ought to hold moſt ſacred, are ſome of the inferior feats they hourly accompliſh; dead to every worthy compunction, and aſhamed only of what has any tincture

of

of propriety, they flutter through life, adorn the picture-ſhop windows, and conſequently are conceived moſt befitting examples for the riſing generation—for is not to celebrate, to applaud?

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

DURING this whole period, the Vicar continued proſperous in guilt; but as ſecurity is the parent of negligence, the parent of deſtruction, ſo from ſecurity did this moſt ſagacious of all deceivers inſenſibly begin to relax one of his ſtricteſt points of prudence, uninterrupted ſobriety. Had Miſs Sidney known more of the world and mankind, ſhe had not been ſo long a ſtranger to her melancholy fate; but the goodneſs of her heart prevented all ſuſpicion, untill, in one of theſe unguarded moments, ſhe diſcovered that Lord Windham was dead.

Her nice ſenſibility was deeply wounded, to find that the man ſhe had made of ſo much conſequence to her, whoſe joys and whoſe inconveniencies ſhe had ſo abundantly ſhared, ſhould think her un-

unworthy of being introduced to his friends. She tried the matter a thouſand different ways,—was he unwilling to hurt the ſon, by publiſhing the errors of the father,—was he afraid of incurring the cenſure of the world for having united himſelf to an unprotected, an unportioned girl, or did he really think her unqualified for polite ſcenes?—She was unable to fix upon any probable reaſon, yet forbore communicating her diſſatisfaction, leſt he ſhould impute it to vanity, ingratitude, or ſelf-ſufficiency, more eſpecially as ſhe found he had great buſineſs upon his hands to call off his attentions from the mere ceremonials of life.

The Vicar's genius was, indeed, pretty well exerciſed at this period:—many failures had tranſpired in political matters to work upon the minds of the unhappy multitude. Amongſt the reſt, American affairs, in however promiſing a ſtate

a ſtate in their beginning, now wore but a mortifying aſpect. Mr. Arundel had, nevertheleſs, the good fortune to ſecure his patron, not only from all diſgrace, but, by a happy attention to the chronological art, contrived, inconceiveably, to advance his reputation—for he ſoon made it appear intelligible to the meaneſt capacities, that the ſpirited opening was wholly Mr. Windham's; the languor, the remiſſneſs, the ſucceeding miniſtry's. He likewiſe whiſpered in every ear he could reach, that a deſcent upon Louiſburg, which bid defiance to all impediments, had been concerted by this moſt indefatigable of men; nay, that the returned fleet were diſpatched for that glorious purpoſe, but what kind of figure their inactivity, he added, would make in the annals of Great Britain, or the immenſe expence the nation had ſo uſeleſsly ſuſtained, he ſhould be very unwilling to ſuggeſt the fainteſt idea, only think, he would in the ſame moment cry,

cry, with proper ſignificance of features, and a marvelling indignant accent, of ſuch an important, ſuch a powerful force, both naval and military, yet not a ſingle ſtroke ſtruck: the French fleet too, that they would obtain ſo unhoped for an opportunity of making their deſired port, inſtead of meeting with the deſtruction they were expoſed to; and to complete the whole, what a ſhattered and diſtreſſed condition did we receive them in from the hand of Providence, though, indeed, ſtorms were not to be guarded againſt!

Whilſt the Vicar thus triumphed in the ſucceſs of his eloquence (for his audience were never wanting in credulity) Mrs. Arundel, it was reported as a piece of ſecret hiſtory, made a very conſiderable purchaſe in the funds, was apparently the moſt brilliant of many brilliant circles, and had a levy equal at leaſt to the firſt miniſter's in the kingdom.

The

The conſequences of this extraordinary conduct of the forces ſent out, whatever was the ſource, were moſt dreadful, miſerable accounts continually arrived; their beſt forts fell a prey to the enemy, conqueſt and devaſtation threatened them from every quarter, and amongſt their other misfortunes, Fort William Henry was loſt.

The Vicar knew well what he was about.—It was an inexpreſſible aggravation, he would ſay, of the miniſterial cabals, that Fort William Henry, which the general could not be ignorant was too thinly provided for a defence, had not been reinforced by a detachment from the unemployed troops; but he preſumed it was their orders to come home to be *reviewed*. How unprecedented, how unpardonable ſuch neglect, he would ſay, and what lamentable effects has it not been productive of! The ſavage acts committed by the beſiegers,

when the unhappily beſieged were unable longer to reſiſt, ſo ſhocking to the mind of humanity! Could it be either uncharitable or preſumptuous to ſuppoſe thoſe would be found unanſwerable for them, by whoſe bad management they had been occaſioned? In a word, by a judicious exerciſe of the means, accidental miſapprehenſion, or, as it was ſhrewdly ſuſpected, his own treachery had furniſhed him with, he ſo diſpoſed the hearts of the people, that his patron's ſmalleſt merits muſt appear to infinite advantage from the contraſt; light and ſhade how eſſential to each other!

Mr. Windham, anxious to avail himſelf of the Vicar's induſtry, yet no leſs anxious to retain the favour of his Sovereign, reſolved by alternate attentions to the continental and provincial intereſt, to keep the balance to his wiſhes.

The

The King of Pruſſia had unceaſingly been played off by the Vicar: in his exigencies, in his victories, the colourings were equally ſtrong; admiration and compaſſion inſenſibly united in the breaſts of the public; admiration and compaſſion was the union he ſought to produce.—Now they exulted in his ſucceſs, and now they felt themſelves depreſſed by his misfortunes, in ſo much that little more was wanting to engage their moſt vigorous aſſiſtance—ſuch is the *free-maſonry* of politics, as it may juſtly, and I have repeatedly called; for none but the mighty few have the ſmalleſt conception of what they are about, or what may poſſibly be the termination. The honeſt, the deluded people conceived they were acting a noble, a voluntary part, inſtead of which, not a ſtep, an inclination, or reſolution was their own, but madly imbibed from the prime miniſter's prime agent — and in the very moment they fancied themſelves moſt free, they were

merely like ſo many puppets dancing to his miſerable wires.

The battle of Roſbach ſtill raiſing the reputation of the Pruſſian hero, the diſadvantages the Engliſh incurred were utterly unperceived by them, though unperceived by them alone. It was now that the Hanoverians were encouraged to reſume their arms—and ſo delighted was the Britiſh Houſe of Commons with their ſpirited conduct, that they unanimouſly voted a hundred thouſand pounds for their preſent ſupport—though at the period of this their generoſity, the honour, the fame, the commerce and the liberty of England were wounded and expiring from inattention.

The Hanoverians had the good ſenſe to reap the utmoſt benefit of their improved condition; the convention, the compulſive convention entered into by the Duke of Cumberland had long ſince

been broken by the French—their territories to the utmoſt verge plundered and deſpoiled; no wonder therefore that they were eager to revenge themſelves on ſo perfidious an enemy.

The French, though without intending it, promoted the Hanoverian cauſe againſt themſelves; ſeveral diſlodgements had been made by the allies, and on a reinforcement from the Pruſſian monarch, they were puſhed ſo cloſe, as to be obliged to retreat with precipitance: deſtroying and ravaging the places through which they paſſed, and to their eternal ſtigma, as a maſter ſtroke, in all the wantonneſs of cruelty ſetting fire to the orphan houſe of Zeli, replete with unoffending and helpleſs inhabitants; an action which ſeemed to render their chaſtiſement not the Hanoverian cauſe, but the cauſe of humanity.

The Hanoverians, on the reſumption of their arms, felt no inconſiderable mortification to find themſelves without a leader. The duke of Cumberland's probity, the duke of Cumberland's martial abilities appeared in a moſt captivating light to their imaginations; but the duke of Cumberland had been treated with too much indignity and injuſtice by the Britiſh miniſtry, when fighting in defence of the Britiſh dominions, ever to be prevailed upon to engage in any more military expeditions. Their exigencies, their neceſſities were at length conveyed to the ear of Pruſſian royalty, who immediately recommended his dearly beloved brother, and moſt experienced officer, Prince Ferdinand to their favour; and his dearly beloved brother was accordingly hailed their general. I would by no means be underſtood to arraign the merits of Prince Ferdinand's military character; but Prince Ferdinand could not be ſuppoſed to have the intereſt of the

Engliſh

Engliſh much at heart.—It was nevertheleſs his engagement to preſs hard upon the French, and ſo far did he adhere to it in the firſt inſtance, that they were compelled totally to abandon the Electorate.

This circumſtance was naturally very acceptable with his Majeſty; nor did the diligent Vicar fail to render it univerſally ſo. The French were become objects of deteſtation. The French were humbled, the French were in a degree overcome, and Prince Ferdinand was therefore conſtituted the ſecond toaſt in every ale-houſe, the ſecond idol of the infatuated populace of Great-Britain.

This humour, ſo propitious to the foreign ſufferers, and ſo long wiſhed to be produced, was not neglected by Mr. Windham. Our naval forces were now openly diſpatched to aſſiſt that cauſe, we had at a former period ſo loudly decried,

as of all others the moſt detrimental to our domeſtic intereſts — and ſo ſuperlatively generous did the Engliſh prove themſelves, that they forgot their recent diſcontents, their recent loſſes, their recent diſappointments, and with bonfires and illuminations celebrated the retaking of Embden by Commodore Holmes,— though the retaking of Embden was no more than opening a port for the reception of future aids from England, at the expence of her own ſafety — ſo little was the proverb in eſteem that *charity ſhould begin at home.*

May no Hiſtorian in his wrath dwell upon the particulars of that frantic period. — May no Hiſtorian in his wrath prepare a page that muſt call forth a bluſh on the cheek of our lateſt poſterity.—O! may it never be told, that when the moſt wretched *omiſſions*, or the moſt abominable *treachery*, had involved us in unſpeakable difficulties, we could

ſo

ſo far fail in the duties we owed to ourſelves, our children, and our country, as to be capable of the moſt extravagant revellings on the birth-day of an imaginary, or at beſt temporary hero, whoſe delight, whoſe trade was war, and who never beſtowed a ſingle thought on *us*, unmingled with ſelf-intereſt, ridicule, or contempt.

CHAP. XVII.

MR. Windham having thus gained ſo material a point, conceived it incumbent upon him, by way of keeping the ſcale even, to purſue or rather revive ſome of his plans reſpecting America.

In an inſtant Mr. Windham ſhone forth the guardian god of the provinces, and Germany, as if by magic power, received the unalarming complexion of the ſecondary object of miniſterial conſideration.

Mrs. Arundel, who conſtantly correſponded with Lady Windham, and had given her repeated invitations to reviſit London, now renewed them with ſuch ſucceſs, that ſhe received information, that, accompanied by her Lord, ſhe was determined to be with her in a few days.

The Vicar's malice, and Mr. Windham's love, were revived by the news. Mr. Windham's public character expoſed him to abundant fatigues, and as his own home had no charms for him, he rejoiced to think he ſhould be enabled to paſs his more retired hours, in converſing with his long admired Sophia, the moſt accompliſhed of women.

As the Vicar had on a former occaſion raiſed the expectations of the public with regard to Louiſbourg, the reduction of Louiſbourg became the object of Mr. Windham's contemplation; and that he might not hazard the loſs of his enterpriſe by ill-timing the embarkation of the deſtined forces, they were diſpatched as early as the beginning of February.

The French did all they could to defeat this ſcheme, but were unſucceſsful: their fleet intended to annoy the Engliſh were deſtroyed; Louiſbourg taken, and

Lord and Lady Windham arrived in London quite a-propos to ſhare the general joy, and join in the general congratulations Mr. Windham was conſidered as intitled to, on his wiſdom and his abilities having been ſo happily directed.---As to the gratitude of the lower orders of the people, it did not fall much ſhort of abſolute deification. Mr. Windham's nerves were however luckily ſtrong enough to ſuſtain all theſe mighty ſhocks of popular adulation; nor was he ever once ſurpriſed into a breach of that moderation, that ſpeciouſneſs of behaviour which had ſo won upon the public favour, and ſo confirmed the public voice.

Lady Windham, whoſe gentle nature ſhuddered at the bare idea of the miſeries, the carnage of war, and whoſe anxiety for the ſafety of Colonel Weſton, and his young friend, from their being eminently concerned in the military part of the enterpriſe, was exceeding lively; expreſſed

preſſed much diſſatisfaction that war in all ages ſhould be as it were the buſineſs of the human ſpecies!

My dear, ſaid Lord Windham, if you could but perſuade the world to examine circumſtances and events with a rational eye, your humanity would be ſecured from the frequent wounds it now experiences: the golden age would be once more reſtored, and peace, the conſtant companion of mankind; but the policy of tyrants has otherwiſe decreed, notwithſtanding there are ſuch large tracks in every country uncultivated and uninhabited. The tyrant no ſooner beholds his dominions populate, than he ſends forth his thouſands, and his ten thouſands to be ſlaughtered in the field.---Evident and inconteſtable as this fact is, continued his Lordſhip, it is with aſtoniſhment that I find the ſpirit of heroiſm exiſting in the very boſom of ſlavery---and yet the monarch's of France can truly boaſt of many

many brave officers. The Engliſh indeed, when they draw the ſword, have a noble incitement---the defence of their liberty, the defence of their property---the Engliſh, from having much to loſe, have much to guard---and the Engliſh could never at any period be charged with drawing the ſword on leſs juſtifiable principles.

Mr. Windham and the Vicar exchanged a kind of ſympathetic ſmile--the Earl's ſimplicity producing one and the ſame ſenſation in each of their breaſts; and their mental interjection was, Oh how little is this harmleſs peer acquainted with courts, courtiers, and the meanders of politics!

Lady Windham had never been in London, but in a retired ſituation. Lady Windham was conſequently much aſtoniſhed at the ſcenes to which her nobility and connexions had introduced her.

Where-

Wherever ſhe went, her huſband was her never-failing attendant — the beaus laughed, the belles bleſſed themſelves— but ſhe was proof againſt the folly of faſhion, and the ſneer of the little minded—nor would ſhe have foregone the ſatisfaction of her huſband's company for all the adulation in the univerſe.

Miſs Louiſa, with all her fund of vivacity, and ſeeming love of life, would not be prevailed upon to quit her venerable Mrs. Weſtley but in ſhort excurſions, and declared herſelf more than compenſated for all the gay world afforded, in the converſations of reaſon, and the offices of friendſhip and humanity.

Mr. Windham, that he might not loſe on the one hand what he had gained on the other, thought it now neceſſary to caſt a friendly eye upon continental affairs—but leſt, when the reigning tranſ-

ports

ſports ſhould ſubſide, diſſatisfaction on obſerving him in his true character might take place — the Vicar was enjoined by actual report or bold inſinuations, ſo artfully to work upon the humour of the populace, that they themſelves ſhould eagerly ſolicit the very conduct he, Mr. Windham, was predetermined to purſue.

With this view the Vicar, wherever he came, warmly entered into a deſcription of the manifold advantages of a litoral war, and proved beyond a doubt, that if Prince Ferdinand was duly reinforced, the French would not only be annoyed, but preſſed and puſhed to the very gates of Paris.

Your Engliſh commonalty have infinite delight in the marvellous. — The French monarch already tottered on his throne, and ſo ſucceſsful was this fineſſe, that Mr. Windham found himſelf compelled

pelled, to either eſpouſe the German intereſt, or forfeit the hearts both of his ſovereign and the people.—He made a very long, and very judicious ſpeech upon the occaſion — profeſſed himſelf (though all reluctant) yet all incapable of reſiſting the general voice, and as he was maſter at once of the happieſt lines and happieſt accents, his elocution was never vainly exerciſed.

Lord Windham could not immediately comprehend this double ſyſtem of politics — it either *was* or *was not* for the good of Britain to follow continental meaſures, and that in the *poſitive* degree. He inſiſted upon it, that a faithful miniſter, inſtead of foregoing, or yielding an important point, ought bravely to maintain it, though the loſs of his poſt, and the loſs of public favour ſhould be the conſequence — for that to be intimidated or over-ruled, was to be highly culpable; for was it not to deſert his principles

principles, and ſacrifice the people? and he would add, the applauſe of thouſands had little to ſoothe the patriot, unleſs the patriot's heart joined its honeſt teſtimony to the juſtice of their application of them, and the juſtice of his claim.

Mr. Windham did not chuſe to be too explicit with a man of Lord Windham's romantic ideas and ſentiments—with a modeſty truly amiable, and no leſs truly exemplary, he therefore only obſerved, that it was more probable for a ſingle judgment to err, than that the judgment of multitudes ſhould be found erroneous; and though he muſt confeſs himſelf incapable of ſeeing things in the light they appeared to the general optics of the kingdom, it might be happy for his country (that everlaſting idol of his affections, and object of his care) that the populace had ſufficient ſpirit and reſolution to compel him to adopt their inclinations, and the inclinations of his ſovereign, for his rule of action.

Lord

Lord Windham ſhook his head from the extravagant opinion, that the man in whoſe compoſition, diſcernment and firmneſs had not an abundant ſhare, was of all others the moſt unfit man for public employments; for if England was to be loſt, whether complimental or mercenary motives were the cauſe, he could perceive but ſmall difference.

Mr. Windham having had his laugh at the expence of the peer, in a *tete-a-tete* with his agent the Vicar, reſolved to purſue his ſchemes with the ſpirit for which he had ſo long been diſtinguiſhed, and which could never fail to captivate the imagination of the vulgar.

The treaty with Pruſſia was ſtrengthened and confirmed with many additional (and for that monarch very advantageous) articles; nor were the ſupplies obtained for the neighbourly purpoſe leſs conſiderable than to the amount of 1,861,891 *l.* This it muſt be allowed was a moſt happy and

and patriotic meaſure, and contributed in an eſſential degree towards leſſening the national debt, and at the ſame time enabled us to proſecute our expenſive and important deſigns in America.--The meaſures, the ſupplies, had however the ſanctifying ſeal of Mr. Windham's approbation, and not a cenſure, not a murmur was heard.

Circumſtances and events, ever favourable to the wiſhes of this ſtateſman, continued ſtill their pleaſing operations---Cherbourg was taken---the Engliſh rejoiced---the French were puſhed to the banks of the Rhine, by the brave Prince Ferdinand (though upon *Heſſian* principles) the Engliſh were wanton in his praiſes; nay the brave Prince Ferdinand croſſed that river in purſuit of the enemy, and formed his motions ſo judiciouſly, that on the third of June, he gained an important advantage at Crevell, and Duſſeldorp was ſurrendered to him. It was then expected by the exulting people

people that Prince Ferdinand would have entered the French dominions, and by proper gradations led on his victorious troops to the very metropolis---but Prince Ferdinand was too honourable, and too experienced a politician, not to grant his neighbours a ſhort breathing-time (an indulgence inſeparable to all true generalſhip, when the ſpirit of the campaign is wiſhed to be preſerved) in which friendly period having collected a powerful force under the command of the Duke de Soubiſe, the face of affairs was very ſoon changed, and the Pariſian territories ſecured from the threatened devaſtation.---The Engliſh were nevertheleſs convinced by the honeſt Vicar's repreſentation, that it could not be otherwiſe, and were brought to admire the wiſdom and vigilance of prince Ferdinand, by his oppoſing an adequate body to that advancing under the conduct of Soubiſe; the command of which was given by him to the prince of Yſenburg. The prince of

Yſenbur

Yſenburg might poſſeſs the firſt military abilities, tho' he happened not to be of the number of fortune's favourites---the duke de Broglio, like another Alexander, came up with him, ſaw, and conquered; nor did the duke de Broglio omit improving his victory to the utmoſt. The junction of the Britiſh troops belonging to the duke of Marlborough, was by this means rendered wholly impracticable.—Conſequently all the *Dukes* except this in the ſervice of his Catholic Majeſty were dreadfully embarraſſed; until one of the French generals, from principles of politeneſs, conceiving this the happieſt of all opportunities for returning Prince Ferdinand's compliment, delivered them from their difficulties, and enabled them to add another wreath to the laurels they had already obtained---but in this place, for the honour of the Engliſh, I cannot help obſerving, that they were as forward to promote contributions for the unſucceſsful, as the ſucceſsful commander,

er, well knowing, and generouſly conſidering, that neither the one, nor the other is dependant upon the choice or power of any man in exiſtence.

The complaiſant Frenchman however was too modeſt to aſſume any merit to himſelf upon the occaſion---his views, as he told the ſtory, being nothing more than the retaking of Duſſeldorp; but as that project failed, he had ſtruck out the equally flattering, though equally fruitleſs one of ſurpriſing Baron Imhoff, and cutting his little army in pieces. Baron Imhoff nevertheleſs eſcaped the ſnare, and by making a happy diſpoſition of his ſmall force, gave the French general a moſt unexpected reception---a defeat was the conſequence, and the Baron by ſpirited marches, immediately on this ſucceſs, effected an union with the duke of Marlborough, and with the other allies. But notwithſtanding this gleam of proſperity, a ſucceſſion of loſſes, imputed by

by the Vicar to the abundant reinforcement of the French army, obliged the allies to terminate the campaign, very little to their ſatisfaction. What Prince Ferdinand poſſeſſed, he was compelled to forego on the approach of the bad ſeaſon. The Engliſh troops in particular ſuffered much by fatigue and ſickneſs, and the duke of Marlborough was himſelf carried off by a dyſentery at Munſter.

Nor were the American attacks, admirable ſoever as they were proclaimed, cloſed without a melancholy cataſtrophe. Soon after the Cherbourg expedition, and the reunion of the fleet and land forces, which, on the debarkation of the latter, were for a long time ſeparated by hard gales, a deſcent was unfortunately reſolved upon, and as unfortunately carried into execution on St. Maloes---for when the troops had but juſt gained the ſhore, ſome diſſatisfaction from difference of opinion ariſing amongſt the commanders,

ers, and which did not ſubſide until the ſurff gathered to a great height, Commodore Howe found himſelf obliged to quit the bay, for that of St. Cas. The army and fleet thus deprived of each other's ſupport, the former became an eaſy prey to the enemy, who bearing down upon them, unprepared as they were for their reception, and compelling them to an immediate engagement, the officers found they had nothing for it but a ſpeedy retreat; their fire, and their reſiſtance were altogether unavailing; and their bravery, and their ſlaughter only ſimilar. Many in deſperation caſt themſelves into the ſea, chuſing rather to periſh meanly, than grace the triumphs of a cruel foe; nor has the loſs the Engliſh ſuſtained on that occaſion, been ever fully ſtated even to this day. This was a blow miſerable Britain could not be inſenſible of; ſhe drooped the head, and exultation, for a ſhort period, was

no more. Had ſuch repeated misfortunes been incurred under any other adminiſtration, the violence, the rage of the populace would have been irreſtrainable---the judicious, the feeling part of the public would have caſt themſelves at the feet of majeſty, to ſolicit vengeance for their wrongs, and if unredreſſed by ſovereign interpoſition, the more daring, and worſe principled would not have heſitated to lift the hand againſt the very life of him that had wrought out their deſtruction---but it was their favourite, it was their eloquent Mr. Windham who preſided at the helm---the blood of their countrymen was bartered for a few fair words, and a nation ſuffered to languiſh, to expire, for the pleaſure of reading the language of ſpecioufneſs, the language of artifice, the language of ſelf-gratification. It is true, Mr. Windham's worſt enemies could not fix a ſtain upon his character; he was too wiſe, and too much

the man of honour to work himſelf, and his agent, with his agent's agents, were too happily choſe for him to have any thing to fear: therefore was the ſmile of complacence ever more preſerved on his countenance, and the honey of ſmooth epithets dwelt at all times upon his lips. Many miniſters have been equally popular, many miniſters have been equally ſucceſsful, many miniſters have been equally vigilant, and many miniſters have been equally ſerviceable to their country, but no miniſter, except Mr. Windham, could *ruin*, yet preſerve themſelves from blame; no miniſter except Mr. Windham could ever boaſt of the warmeſt teſtimonies of the people's approbation, in the moment that he was *baring* the knife againſt their boſoms, and their peace; nor could any miniſter except Mr. Windham have introduced that moſt groſs abſurdity, that the fighting our neighbour's battles was fighting our own, with univerſal credu-

lity and univerſal ſatisfaction. Such nevertheleſs are the triumphs of Mr. Windham's adminiſtration, and ſuch moſt aſſuredly has been the folly, the abuſe of the people.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

MR. Arundel relieved by the cloſing of the campaign from intenſe labour, Miſs Sidney began to think it no unfit ſeaſon for ſatisfying her doubts, and removing her diſſatisfactions; not that ſhe in the remoteſt degree ſuſpected ſhe had been betrayed, or, at worſt, had been other than neglected by her huſband.

The Vicar one evening, on his arrival at Stepney, perceived care and anxiety on that countenance where the Loves and Graces ſeemed moſt peculiarly to revel; he very naturally therefore enquired into the cauſe. Mr. Arundel, reſumed the Lady, rather emphatically, I fear I have been deceived---you flattered me that I was of the utmoſt conſequence to your happineſs, and ſhould ſhare your reputation and fortune---the Earl of Windham is dead.

What can you mean? exclaimed the arch fiend; I ſhook hands with his lordſhip within this half hour: can the woman of my heart, and the delight of my eyes, at this time of day, queſtion either my faith or truth?

I was prepared for mortification, ſaid Miſs Sidney, but not the mortification I find I muſt experience; you do not treat me quite kindly; it was yourſelf, Mr. Arundel, in an hour of intoxication, that let the ſecret eſcape you, which otherwiſe, I find, was not deſigned for my ear. I have ſupported—but we will talk no more of it.

Mr. Arundel was by no means pleaſed with this converſation; he well knew how little his conduct would bear the teſt of enquiry, and there was ſomething of a determined, though unoffending air about the lady that ſeemed to imply that ſhe was not to be trifled with. He, however, thought

thought it wiſeſt to take her at her word, for he remembered the good obſervation of Solomon, that in ſilence there was ſafety, and by introducing a ſucceſſion of lively or intereſting ſubjects, divert her mind totally from one that threatened very unpleaſant conſequences.

But Miſs Sidney, though ſhe could have forgiven actual unkindneſs, could not forgive this attempt to impoſe upon her, but, catching the mode from him, affected a compoſure ſhe could not feel, and the vicar parted from her the next morning with apparent confuſion.

Miſs Sidney, now convinced that there was ſome extraordinary myſtery in his proceedings, and unable to endure the tortures of ſuſpence, dreſſed herſelf in the plaineſt manner poſſible, and having ſent for a hackney coach, ordered the man to drive to a milliner's in the neighbourhood of St. James's, whom ſhe had

often heard the Vicar mention with approbation, and from whom he had frequently brought her very valuable preſents. Mrs. Raymond no ſooner underſtood ſhe was Mr. Arundel's acquaintance than ſhe was profuſe in her civilities, aſſured her that ſhe had the beſt ſet of cuſtomers in the world through his intereſt, Mr. Windham and his lady, Lady Windham and her Lord, Mrs. Weſtly and Miſs Wentworth, and, not the leaſt conſiderable though laſt mentioned, Mrs. Arundel herſelf.

The innocent Miſs Sidney, from applying the compliment according to her comprehenſion of it, returned her bow of acknowledgement, and, having conſented to take a diſh of coffee, endeavoured to lead the really intelligent and good-natured Mrs. Raymond, into further particulars —and pray madam, ſaid ſhe, ſince I find you are ſo well acquainted with

with the family, how long has the old çarl been dead?

O! madam, returned Mrs. Raymond, a vaſt while; a fit of the gout carried him off, and Mr. and Mrs. Arundel had much fatigue with him during his illneſs.

Miſs Sidney felt an involuntary trembling, and could only repeat, Mrs. Arundel, madam—

I thought you had known her, ſaid Mrs. Raymond; ſhe is a fine, fat, good-natured lady as any in the whole world, and dreſſes—Mrs. Raymond was enlarging upon the merits of her cuſtomer with uncommon pleaſure and volubility, when looking up ſhe perceived her gueſt in a ſwoon and totally inſenſible. She rung for aſſiſtance, but all aſſiſtance was for ſome time vain, and the whole houſe deſpaired of her ever recovering more: at length, however, the unfortunate and amiable

amiable creature opened her eyes; does the coach wait? demanded ſhe; I would be conveyed from hence home. The people, exceedingly affected by her diſtreſs and illneſs, intreated that ſhe would not think of leaving them untill ſhe was better, or at leaſt that ſome one of them might be permitted to attend her home. Mr. Arundel does not live far from here, ſaid Mrs. Raymond. Do not name him, madam, cried the wretched Miſs Sidney; he *knows* me not, nor ſhall he ever behold me again; if you will kindly aſſiſt me to the carriage which brought me to the door, I will return you my beſt thanks. The carriage was inſtantly called, but the good-natured Mrs. Raymond would inſiſt upon going ſome part of the way with her to ſee how the motion of the coach agreed with her, and promiſed to leave her the moment ſhe wiſhed to be alone. Happy was it for Miſs Sidney that ſhe fell into ſuch humane hands; ſhe had frequent returns of her faintings, during

during which, Mrs. Raymond ſupported her in her arms, and at length prevailed upon her to ſtop at a houſe in the way to take ſome refreſhment. I would not be imperti ent for all the world, ſaid ſhe, but there is much to intereſt in your appearance and behaviour; if I could be ſerviceable—tears were all the anſwer ſhe obtained, till ſtarting from a profound reverie, can you, ſaid Miſs Sidney, can you enable me to conceal myſelf from all the world? do you know where the wretche d may find an aſylum? forI am only wretched; to guilt, thank heaven! I am as yet a ſtranger: I have one hundred pounds that I can call my own; I would ſubſiſt upon it untill I am ſomewhat recovered, if I knew but where to hide this miſerable head.

Only be compoſed, madam, ſaid Mrs. Raymond, and leave the reſt to me. We have hours ſufficient before us, if it will not

not be too much for your ſtrength, and I will convey you where you ſhall be moſt kindly treated.

Let us go this inſtant, cryed the weeping girl; I have my little treaſure always about me; it was the laſt, the dying preſent of a moſt affectionate father; little did he think what a ſad purpoſe it would anſwer; a hundred pound note, madam, was all he had to leave, and I have been ſo circumſtanced ever ſince, as to have preſerved it unbroken; I am now quite eaſy, quite reſigned, and will conſider you as my better angel for the ſervices you will render me.

Mrs. Raymond, ſtruck with the beauty and innocence of Miſs Sidney, ſet her down in her own mind for a young creature the Vicar had formed deſigns upon, and therefore thought the beſt means of ſavpg her would be to put her under th erotection of thoſe who were in ſome degree

degree connected with him; ſhe accordingly gave the coachman orders to drive to the village where Mrs. Weſtly and Miſs Louiſa Wentworth lived, and acquainting them with her ſuſpicions, ſoon gained their protection of her. Miſs Sidney was inconceivably diſtreſſed when ſhe diſcovered the ſtep Mrs. Raymond had taken; but Louiſa, with all the ſweet perſuaſion of humanity and tenderneſs, beſought her to repoſe upon their boſoms. We will neither betray you to Mr. Arundel, ſaid ſhe, nor enquire more into your own family affairs than you may wiſh to reveal: Mr. Arundel never viſits here, and as for Lord and Lady Windham, I can anſwer for their meeting with your utmoſt approbation; but have you no father, mother, friends? O! not one of all you have mentioned, ſaid Miſs Sidney, am I bleſſed with; I will, however, added ſhe after a pauſe, with your permiſſion, board in your neighbourhood, and when acquaintance

ſhall

ſhall have taught you how to eſteem me perhaps I may find ſome tolerable felicity. Mrs. Raymond took her leave, highly ſatisfied with having ſnatched a young creature from deſtruction, and promiſed to be as ſecret as the grave.

The good Mrs. Weſtly beheld the lovely girl with the utmoſt kindneſs, and, though a lodging had been taken for her at a neighbouring farmer's, inſiſted that ſhe ſhould ſpend that night at her houſe; we will ſoothe, ſaid ſhe to Louiſa, we will ſave her: in which generous reſolution Miſs Louiſa moſt warmly concurred.

The Vicar was too much alarmed by Miſs Sidney's behaviour not to make her an early viſit; but how was ſhe aſtoniſhed when he found ſhe was gone beyond his utmoſt reach! he was enraged; he was diſappointed; but it was not convenient to betray too much of either the one or the other; he therefore reſolved to ſit down

down quietly with his loſs, and as love could no longer fill up his vacant hours, he determined to welcome hatred and revenge once more to his breaſt. Lady Windham was with him the unmerited object of both thoſe dire paſſions; Lady Windham was conſequently marked down on the *black* leaf of his heart. Every thing was ſettled at Stepney with all poſſible ſecrecy; the ſervants gratified and diſcharged, to purchaſe their ſilence; the goods and houſe transferred to a brother, to make what advantage he could of them, and the Vicar took an everlaſting leave of that moſt aukward of ſituations.

END of VOL. I.

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